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Photos Emma Wong

This electrified Moraga home offered tour visitors a chance to see heat pump systems for cooling and heating, hot water, and washers/dryers, as well as a Tesla Solar Roof, powerwalls, and an induction range in the kitchen

Moraga residence on Electrified Home Tour

By Emma Wong

A glittering, solar-powered roof. Powerwall batteries. An induction stove, heat pump water heater, and clothes dryer.

Self-powered, electric living may appear too good to be true. But for Anne Chambers and Ed McAlpine, the future has arrived with their electrified Moraga home.

On Sunday, March 10, the Chambers/McAlpine house was featured in the first-ever Electrified Home Tour, organized by the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour. Tour coordinator Kathy Kramer showcased four homes across Alameda and

Contra Costa Counties that promote eco-friendly, electric-powered appliances.

The Electrified Home Tour originated from Kramer's concern about increasing carbon emissions. According to a 2021 national report, commercial and residential sectors contributed a sixth of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, following transportation and industry. Burning gas—to heat our homes, water, and food, and to run our clothes dryers—is a main source of carbon emissions, emitting gasses that cause global warming. However, switching to electric appliances that are powered by clean energy stops these emissions.

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Lafayette Council received results of telephone survey to tackle upcoming fiscal challenges

By Lou Fancher

Dr. Gary Manross of Strategy Research Institute at the council meeting March 11 presented survey findings about the city's fiscal standing that were designed for and drew from a sample size of 400 registered Lafayette voters. The scientific telephone survey was conducted between Jan. 15 and Feb. 15. The council had directed SRI to gather data and assess voters' willingness to support a sales tax rate increase to counter ongoing structural deficits of approximately 10% every year that will result in annual deficits of \$2 million if not proactively addressed.

Specifically, the survey sought findings in three categories:

1. Determining whether or not a funding Measure intended to allow Lafayette City officials to address the fiscal challenges they will be facing beginning in the next fiscal year will pass or fail, if placed on the November ballot.
2. Identifying the collective core values and perceptions having to do

with likely support for a funding Measure asking Lafayette voters to authorize an increase in the City's sales tax in order to address the fiscal challenges that City officials will soon be facing.

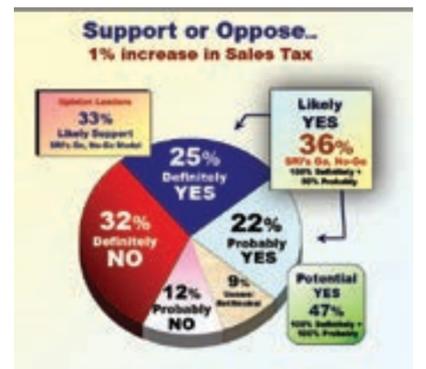
3. Testing the impact on voting behavior of specific arguments both in support of and in opposition to embracing such a funding Measure; in other words, would the respective argument cause voters to be more supportive of or more inclined to oppose such a funding Measure.

Among the most critical results Manross highlighted in his presentation was that nearly three-quarters (74%) of local voters were not aware that the City will soon be facing an annual deficit of about \$2 million. "They just don't know," he said.

When the survey asked respondents about the level of concern they would experience if they were informed by a trusted source about the fiscal challenges soon facing the city, 83% said learning this from a trusted

source would make them concerned, 30% it would make them highly concerned, and over half (53%) said the news would make them somewhat concerned. Not unexpectedly, trusted sources known as "opinion leaders" by voter analysts (58 of the survey's 400 responders were deemed opinion leaders), reveal the follow-the-leader influence in survey results showing 91% of all mainstream "information followers" reported they would become concerned at some level should these thought leaders convey the city's potential deficit information.

Of the nine issues presented, the top three the respondents identified as most concerning if negative funding impacts Lafayette in fiscal year 2024-25 were the city's ability to maintain city streets, roads, and storm drains; inability to implement and maintain adequate wildfire preparedness; and being unable to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety in Lafayette. The three concerns given secondary prominence re-



lated to preserving open space, downtown parks, and recreation facilities, a vibrant downtown, and establishing enough control of new development projects. Completing the list and positioned as less concerning were crime, lack of housing, and climate change.

In positive findings, 93% of mainstream residents said they were satisfied with the quality of life in Lafayette and almost 58% are very satisfied.

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Life in Lamorinda

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Sports

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Our Homes

OH1-OH12

What to know about e-vehicle batteries — Page OH4





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 Phone: (925) 284-1968
Chamber of Commerce:
www.lafayettechamber.org

**Lafayette Public Meetings
 City Council**

Regular Meeting: Monday, April 8, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Planning Commission Meeting
 Monday, April 1, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Design Review
 Monday, April 8, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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COMPASS

Feedback from HCD for City's Housing Element certification is becoming more specific

By Lou Fancher

Planning and Building Director Greg Wolff and Housing Consultant Diana Elrod returned to city council March 11

with updated information resulting from a meeting staff held with the State Department of Housing and Community

Development on Feb. 27 regarding the Housing Element. Staff last reported to the council Feb. 26 and, having discussed the HE with HCD the following day, they received specific feedback about how Lafayette might best achieve the long-sought HE certification.

Specifically, staff asked for additional direction from HCD regarding metrics, geographic targeting, and specific commitments and actions the City will plan to implement if the metrics are not met. The meeting also covered topics such as the narrative necessary to explain the status of pipeline projects, redevelopment of small sites, and the criteria against which sites were measured for suitability in the inventory. Of particular importance was an extended discussion with HCD of how the city's suite of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) actions address mobility opportunities and commitments throughout Lafayette's all highest-resource community.

Elrod led the council through HCD's responses (available at the city website) and staff's recommendations for actions aimed at satisfying or clarifying the topics highlighted as vital for receiving certification. Local processing and permitting procedures

were emphasized in HCD's most recent letter and at the meeting; it was recommended the city review state codes and regional ordinances to ensure the compliance with established legal standards. Elrod outlined in her presentation the various zoning guidelines, standards applicable to conversions of existing single-family housing (to multi-unit housing, for example), and HE's repeated emphasis on expanding the program's coverage radius by 1/2 mile while continuing to exclude high wildfire zones.

Among other items tagged as incomplete, the inventory list needed more evidence of feasibility, according to HCD. "What this really boils down to," Elrod said, is that the city must augment the list and address known impediments to development. Staff recommended the issue receive continued attention and more information from HCD prior to future direction from the council.

The AFFH program, as narrated by the city in the draft under discussion, should be revised with language about milestones, unit objectives, and geographic targeting related to maximizing densities in low density zones, Elrod said. Recently amendments were made to how ADUs impact Regional - Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers, and staff advised council to wait for more input from HCD after a second meeting planned for March 12.

Questions from council included staff's assessment of the meeting and whether or not the city is moving in tandem with HCD's expectations.

Wolff, without being able to predict 100 percent assurance, said staff believes the meeting with HCD was positive and productive and, therefore, the HE draft is making progress toward certification.

At council's request, Wolff displayed the map depicting the parameters of a revised version of the included downtown area with the 1/2 mile extension applied. Revisions to zoning may be required and he said are likely "to some degree."

Council member Susan Candell asked several questions relating to design reviews, faith-based organizations (FBO) that have contacted the city about potential development projects, and the necessity of expanding the coverage area, which is not actually legally under HCD's purview, nor is it required. Elrod confirmed the city would be able to continue design reviews, and more educational outreach would be developed for FBO's. Having asked HCD repeatedly about the absolute necessity of the 1/2 mile radius with the same response, staff are unlikely to receive a different answer from continued queries.

Public comments questioned and expressed concern about HCD's requirements, asked for more clarifications about density increases related to several aspects of the HE, and suggested the community would benefit from more precise narrative about the impact the HE would have in specific neighborhoods and in the downtown core of the city. The majority of people commenting both at the meeting and virtually suggested the city

had "done enough" to satisfy HCD and should "push back" against increased development to preserve the aspects they appreciate about Lafayette.

Returning the discussion to council and staff, several council members voiced support for residents' concerns about density and in what situations the city might retain jurisdiction related to the number of units on a given lot and parking issues, for example, if a single-family home was converted to four-unit housing. Pushing back against HCD's findings, Wolff said, "The legislature and the governor signed into law the housing law and it is our practice to date and moving forward to comply with the housing law." He said assertions could be made during meetings with them, but the decisions about compliance are HCD's to make. Not complying, he said, could have severe implications for the community. The expansion of housing laws was "new territory" and all cities and regions continue to grapple with the complexity of HCD's—and the law's—terms.

Upon reviewing the staff's recommendations, the council issued support conditioned on revisions to approximately one-half dozen terms and metrics in the proposed amended draft. They asked that staff ask HCD at the next meeting to answer council's and the public's questions about their jurisdiction, or lack thereof, related to RHNA housing levels. The item was continued to March 25 when staff will return to council with updates and revisions to the HE.

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Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette lopc.org

Small actions add up to big change over time

By Sharon K. Sobotta



Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

An intergenerational crowd of nearly 100 people—including mothers, children, and community elders, came together recently to share art and stories, and connect with each other at the Soul of my Soul Exhibit sponsored by the Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center in Lafayette mid-March.

Margli Auclair is a member of the Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center and an organizer of the event. “We bring awareness to issues like war and social justice,” Auclair said about the nonpartisan organization that hosted the event. The courtyard was filled with artwork, shoes, and photographs. Because many people were fasting for Ramadan, people stopped short of breaking bread together. Instead they enjoyed music, story time with books by Palestinian authors, and time to connect with

one another.

“I think it was important for kids to have a chance to hear voices, writing, and stories about Palestinian children, because it gives them a fresh perspective,” Auclair said. “Stories humanize people. It’s important for children to see themselves and each other represented and to know that they matter because they’re part of the community.”

Yosra Abdelaziz said the work of MDPJC exemplifies the power of community. “Our organization is apolitical and independent. It’s made up of moms from different nationalities, religions, and backgrounds that care about human beings and felt compelled to do something” Abdelaziz said. “As moms, we felt the voices of children highlighted a perspective to consider.”

Abdelaziz told participants who might feel overwhelmed, discouraged, and unheard by political leaders, to remember that small things really do matter. “I know that sometimes the problems of the world seem much bigger than us as individuals. And that leaves us [asking ourselves] ‘what’s the point? Will anything I do matter?’” Abdelaziz said. “I’m here to tell you that actions do matter. Everyone has a role. Together, even if we all play a small part, it all adds up.”

The Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center has launched its 26th annual Art & Writing Challenge and Youth Activist Grant Awards with submissions due on April 20 and a luncheon on May 11. For more information about the center or the contest, visit www.ourpeacecenter.org.

Upcoming fiscal challenges

... continued from Page 1

The opinion leaders came in at 90%, indicating they are close to the percentage of the mainstream response.

Regarding the low crime concern, Manross said, “When you see crime down here, that’s good. It means your community knows it has a safe community, knows its police department is doing a wonderful job. That’s one of the reasons they chose to move to Lafayette: because it is a safe, wonderful community.”

The opinion leaders and mainstream responders reported 86-90% satisfaction when it came to a number of city-sponsored services and programs. For parks, trails and recreation amenities, it was 86-88%, and satisfaction with the level of police services stood at 83-88%, with 43% of that being very satisfied.

Maintenance of public streets was given a thumbs down at 65-77%. Quality of education is not under the city’s domain, but Manross said it was significant and important to include because it is key to understanding community members’ actual satisfaction and presenting non-skewed findings. That figure ranged from 76-80%. Interactions with city employees the survey showed registered at 63-67% satisfied, which Manross said was strong as compared to other municipalities and showed “something nice about your professional staff. I’m sure this doesn’t hurt their feelings.”

Coding and community development he said are always lower in every city and, true to form, the survey had roughly 25% somewhat to extremely dissatisfied and only 57-58% satisfied.

Turning to solutions to increase revenue to address the \$2 million shortcoming, the survey asked about finding new resources or cutting back services and programs. Manross said options were limited to things such as increasing property tax—an action that would result in about \$200 annually per parcel for property owners. In-

creasing sales tax by one percent was another idea. “Your neighboring communities have done this successfully,” he noted, before mentioning that previous efforts by Lafayette to do the same had failed. He said the problem in part lay in a large percentage of the electorate being unaware of the budget deficits to come.

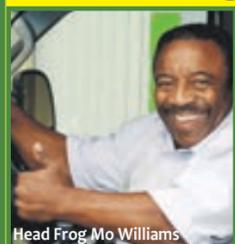
Manross suggested that building support among the undecided or potential probables for approving a sales tax increase is critical for it to be successful. “It’s been shown in Lafayette, your voter wants control of how [their] money is spent. [They say], if it’s important enough to me, I’ll spend money on it—but I want to be sure you spend money on it.” He said the good news is that the city needs only 50% to say yes, but the difficulty of coalescing that pool of support is considerable. Awareness of the need is critical, campaigning for either a yes or no vote is not something the city can be

engaged in, and ultimately, voters must trust the source of information and the accuracy, objectivity, and transparency of the information.

After Manross outlined components of community outreach to increase awareness of the situation, public comment had people asking about the cause of the deficit, emphasizing that solutions must relate to the community’s core values, and requires more details about the survey’s process and findings. City staff answered several of the questions and discussed the best methods for implementing the survey findings.

The council amended and accepted staff’s recommendation that the city approve up to \$60,000 for IMC Corp to serve as public relations consultant for up to 8 months to assist with a city-wide informational campaign, inclusive of \$12,000 for Interactive tools to receive residents’ feedback. The matter will return at future meetings.

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Moraga iKind co-founder, Wendell Baker, named town's 2024 Citizen of the Year

By Vera Kochan

Wendell Baker, known to many in town as the unassuming co-founder of the nonprofit Moraga iKind, has been unanimously selected as the 2024 Citizen of the Year.

According to some of the nomination letters singing Baker's praises, he is someone who doesn't seek the spotlight, but rather chooses to be a tour de force behind the scenes while spreading the iKind message, which is to "promote civility and compassion in our community. Our mission is to promote kindness and courtesy, to foster courage and bravery, based on the belief that empathy and inclusion constitute the foundation on which community is built."

Baker's "day job" as a control system engineer for Able-Baker Automation involves "doing control system integration for factories by designing and writing the programs that make things work."

Moraga iKind was formed by Baker (while he served as a scoutmaster), former superintendent of the Moraga School District Bruce Burns, and Eric Andresen after a 2012 incident whereby the Boy Scouts of America denied Andresen's son the privilege of becoming an Eagle Scout because he is gay. In 2013, the BSA changed their ruling, but by then the iKind wheels

were in motion, holding their first meeting at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. As word began to spread about the organization, the community became involved.

Baker's involvement and dedication to iKind's message and vision does not go unnoticed by members of the community. He can always be spotted at public events such as 4th of July at Commons Park, the Pear and Wine Festival, and the Moraga Community Faire carrying boxes full of free message bracelets, posters, pens, and more. Moraga iKind has donated towards the purchase of 600 T-shirts reading "All are welcome at JM" to staff and students, and Baker has purchased expensive licensing to screen anti-bullying documentaries for the PTA's movie nights for the students (often acting as the evening's sound/video technician). His presence has also been noted at the town's elementary schools and at Campolindo High School.

Heavily involved with the success of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), as well as, DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging), Baker has created laminated posters expressing messages of kindness and tolerance. He encourages students

to "Be an Upstander" when it comes to bullying by urging them to: "refuse to be a bystander; lend a hand; alert an adult; stop spreading hurtful messages; speak up; be a friend; respect differences; use welcoming language; listen to others; and encourage discussions."

"We've tried to reach out to other school districts," Baker stated, "but, it's been hit and miss. I've distributed a lot of things to the Rainbow Community Center in Concord."

Baker started spreading the organization's word by attending various town meetings in an effort to promote the iKind message. "I just wanted to show kids that the community is behind them," he explained. "It should be a consistent message." Still volunteering his services to the scouts, even though his own kids are now grown and out of the system, Baker's troops marched in the family-friendly section of San Francisco's Gay Pride Parade and won the "Absolutely Fabulous Overall Contingent".

Baker's nominators have described him as someone who "makes Moraga a safer, kinder place to live, work and play; he is leaving a lasting impression on the children of Moraga; has made a tremendous impact on the students



Photo Vera Kochan

2024 Citizen of the Year – Moraga iKind's Wendell Baker

and our local schools; is committed to serving by promoting messages of equity, belonging, and kindness; a quiet force; an invaluable asset to our community; and has truly helped make this a better place for us all."

He suspected something was up when Baker saw Moraga Citizens Network Executive Director Ellen Beans' name on his caller ID and knowing that MCN had taken over the Citizen of the Year duties from approximately 40 years under Moraga Valley Kiwanis leadership. His family was thrilled for him, but Baker was worried that he might have a scouting commitment on April 14, the day of the celebration honoring him.

MCN's decision to pick up the Citizen of the Year torch was an easy one. "It fits our mission statement," stated Beans. "We are all about getting

people to participate in our town and getting to honor someone who does that is part of the mission. We're also making the celebration low-cost to make it more inclusive for everyone."

Baker hopes to get the town's local businesses more involved with Moraga iKind by placing posters visibly in windows. He stresses that everything he promotionally offers is free. "Spread kindness – we're a pay it forward organization, and we don't take donations. Just be kind."

For more information visit: www.moragainternet.org or email Baker at: Wendell@able-baker.com.

To attend the 2024 Citizen of the Year reception on Sunday, April 14, visit: MCNMoraga.org and scroll down to: Tickets for the Citizen of the Year Celebration.

Progress update of 2023 Town Goals and Priorities

By Vera Kochan

Much has been accomplished last year with regards to Moraga's 2023 Goals and Priorities that had been set forth by the Town Council. There were 14 specific categories that were agreed upon, with a significant amount of completion having been achieved.

According to Town Manager Scott Mitnick's March 13 staff report, the town wanted to "continue to lay the foundation and create pathways for a better mix of housing and the re-vitalization of the Town's two commercial areas, including adopting a certified Housing Element, rezoning the commercial centers and Bollinger Canyon, updating the General Plan, and completing an evacuation study." The Town received State Certification of its Housing Element and rezoned two large commercial centers to allow for commercial, housing, and mixed-use projects to align with California's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RNHA) requirement of 1,118 new housing units. Also, Rheem Valley Center Ob-

jective Design Standards, along with the Affordable Housing Ordinance, were adopted. The town also re-zoned the Bollinger Canyon Special Study Area & Adopted Development Standards. It began the General Plan 2040 Update Process and started work with Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), Lafayette, and Orinda to prepare a Lamorinda Region Evacuation Study while applying for a Sustainable Communities Grant to fund it.

Mitnick's report noted another goal was to "maintain fiscal discipline, position the Town for long-term fiscal sustainability, and efficiently sustain core operations of the Town and services to our residents." The Town converted from an annual budget format to a biennial budget format, and adopted a balanced biennial operating & CIP budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 and fiscal year 2024-2025 which included a five-year CIP forecast. Moraga continued to adhere to a 50% General Fund Budget Reserve Pol-

icy, refunded \$4.7 million 2013 certificates of participation debt, and earned Standard & Poor's AAA General Government Credit Rating.

The Town is on track to "complete the second year of the 2022-2024 'Worst First Residential Streets' Pavement Reconstruction Project" and has thus far rehabilitated 3.6 miles of streets, improving Moraga's overall Pavement Condition Index (PCI) from 74 to 76. The percentage of "Poor Condition" and "Very Poor Condition" in all street categories has been reduced, and the overall residential streets "Poor Condition" category dropped from 3.4% (2020) to 1.1% (2024), while the "Very Poor Condition" category dropped from 1.1% (2020) to 0.6%. The Town's overall PCI ranking placed Moraga's streets in the Bay Area's top 20%. The Pavement Rehabilitation projects will be combined into one, which is currently out to bid, soon becoming the largest project of its kind for the Town.

The staff report dis-

cussed the continuation of the "Storm Drain Operations and Maintenance Program and completion of 2021-2023 storm drain capital improvement projects" by referring to the Annual Storm Drain Repairs Project which is out for a re-bid; the Moraga Road Drainage Improvements Project out for bid this summer; and the continuing work on the Laguna Creek Restoration at the Hacienda de las Flores Phase 2 project.

Also on the list was to "support high-quality police and emergency response services, including securing energy alternatives for emergencies, and coordinate with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) on fire safety and planning." The Moraga Police Department (MPD) ensured compliance with state training requirements for its police officers, including crisis intervention and de-escalation training. MPD worked with MOFD on emergency responses, special events, evacuation planning, and in responding to SB 1000 (environmental justice). There were community-wide virtual evacuation drills and training with Saint Mary's College public safety personnel. The General Plan Safety Element was updated with input from MPD and MOFD.

Moraga sought to "enhance the Town's parks, open space and facilities for the benefit of the public and move forward with public input into a Town-Wide Recreation and Open Space Plan." Mitnick's update stated that the Art in Public Spaces Committee approved four sculptures on loan from two artists and a mural to be located on the Corporate Yard wall. Moraga also completed the Commons Park Picnic Area Renovation Project; began the Disc Golf

Course Improvements Project; completed two Eagle Scout Park Projects; worked with Contra Costa County Fire on vegetation abatement projects using Measure X Funding; completed carpet/furniture replacement and exterior lighting at the Moraga Library; completed the design and construction of Commons Park Picnic Area Renovation Project; and made progress on Commons Park Restroom Replacement Project.

The Town pursued "measures designed to improve traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle safety, especially around our schools, crosswalks, through routes, and residential street entry points to the Town's main roadways." According to Mitnick, MPD conducted patrols designed to address traffic complaints from residents. Also begun was the Moraga Road and Campolindo Drive Traffic Safety and Circulation Study Project, Smart Signals Project Agreements, and an agreement with CCTA to move forward on the Moraga and Canyon Road (St. Mary's Road to Sanders Drive) Complete Streets Project. Additionally, the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program Cycle-10 grant for Safety Improvement projects and a Caltrans authorized Cycle-11 SIP will begin. The Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School Project is moving forward, and the Town received a \$600,000 MTC Priority Development Area Planning Grant for its School Street Complete Streets Project.

Mitnick's report stated that the Town

hoped to "work with the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, Saint Mary's College, and our local school districts to enhance Moraga's business and education climate." The Town coordinated with the Chamber to execute the Community Faire, Bunnies & Brews, and Hacienda Nights; encouraged its staff to attend Chamber mixer events; conducted General Plan 2040 outreach with Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School's Safety Committee; conducted an outreach with SMC along with a "State of the Town" luncheon; and expanded After-School Enrichment Programs.

Moraga continued "outreach to the public and provided opportunities for input from all segments of the community." MPD participated in National Night Out, increased its presence on school campuses, and assigned a juvenile police officer to work with students. The Town completed a Moraga Parks and Recreation Community Survey, a Senior Programming Focus Group, a Corp Yard Wall Mural Survey, and conducted public outreach to community organizations, boards, commissions, and resident groups.

The staff report stated that the Town continued to "work with Wedgewood to enhance the Hacienda and address the impacts of operations on the neighborhood" by working with Wedgewood to provide window treatments to eastern second floor windows,

... continued on Page 5

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Wed., April 10, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Tuesday, April 2, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission: TBA



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SMC honored International Women's Day with Matsuri Festival

By Vera Kochan



Photo Vera Kochan

Oakland Taiko performs during SMC International Women's Day event

The Center for Women & Gender Equity, at Moraga's Saint Mary's College, held its first International Women's Day celebration on March 8 with a Matsuri Festival theme. Matsuri is a traditional festival celebrating Japanese deities through dance, shows, parades, and processions.

The celebrations began with a March 6 show titled "Not Yo' Butterfly" featuring author, singer, songwriter, and Japanese Internment Camp survivor, Noboku Miyamoto, who shared her stories, sang her songs, and read

excerpts from her book. The film "100 Years From Mississippi" was screened on March 7 with its director Tarabu Betsurai Kirkland on hand to discuss his mother's escape from the racism and violence in the early 1900s of the South.

"At CWGE, we're committed to addressing gender from an intersectional lens along with other prongs of identity -- particularly race," stated its director Sharon Sabotta. "Tarabu Betsurai Kirkland and Noboku Miyamoto allowed us to enliven this message and

simultaneously touch hearts and minds."

Sabotta, along with SMC student chair Aya Banaja, started the festival out with an all-campus barbecue of Asian food by Good Eating Company. SMC's Ferroggiaro Quad was bordered by various school or student group tables operated by women in honor of the occasion.

Lunar Accessories Handmade Jewelry (Instagram @lunarxaccessories) sold earrings made by a 2nd year SMC student; La Hermandad advertised an upcoming karaoke event at The Intercultural Center; Saint Mary's Against Cancer offered female cancer awareness; Gael Sisterhood's table had all of the components necessary to make a "thank you" card for a special female in one's life; Community Violence Solutions strives to end sexual assault and family violence; SMC Diverse Abilities brings student unity, awareness, and inclusion to students with disabilities.

Additional participants included Student Coalition Against Abuse

and Rape (SCAAR) which holds educational workshops; Residents Hall Associates (students) and Residential Experience (parents) plan and curate on-campus events for students who lack transportation for off-campus fun; the Student Health Center offers urgent care treatment on campus; the BART Bystander Program seeks to stop harassment against train riders; Student Disability Services works with students and staff to provide equitable opportunities; and this month SMC's library highlighted books by and about famous women.

Entertainment was provided by Oakland Taiko, a Japanese drumming group, and the festivities ended with Miyamoto leading the event-goers in an Obon Odori (Ancestral Spirit Dance) intended to remember loved ones and "to say that we all count."

"Having the Obon Odori and taiko drumming to create the ambiance of a Matsuri and an all-campus barbecue on International Women's Day was truly magical,"

said Sabotta. "The idea of that dance is to bring people from all ages and stages of life into a common circle. It's a coming together of sorts, and that is just what happened during IWD. We saw athletes dancing alongside

staff and faculty, who danced alongside students from all walks of life, who might not have otherwise crossed paths with each other, doing a common dance. I hope this will be the first of many IWD festivals at SMC."

Town Goals and Priorities

... continued from Page 4

negotiating with them to pay for full utility costs and certain capital improvements, continuing to monitor noise decibel readings, developing long-term operational solutions, and recurring financial payments that have increased.

Moraga has onboarded the "new Town Manager with minimum disruption to staff and to operations, and collaboratively streamlined Town Council meetings." Mitnick's first day with

the Town was April 10, 2023. Additional support staff was hired to fill vacancies; the executive team is evolving into a top-notch leadership unit, staff morale continues to improve, Town Council Chamber operational and safety improvements have been implemented, and improvements have been made to staff presentations at Council meetings.

The Town strives to lessen its "impact on the environment by continuing to implement sustainability and resiliency ini-

tiatives and viable strategies in Moraga's Climate Action Plan and in the Town's Facility Energy Generation Study." Staff remains fully committed to implementing energy efficiency projects going forward and has worked on sustainability initiatives throughout the General Plan 2040. An energy consultant is developing a cost proposal to manage the Power Purchasing Agreement RFP process for selection of a Facility Energy Reliability Projects contractor.

Moraga conducted a

"Town Council/Town Manager session focused on effectiveness and organizational competency" by holding a study session, and it approved revised Town Council Protocols.

Lastly, Mitnick's update cites the initiation of "the process of amending the Town-Wide Noise Ordinance" by awarding a Town-Wide Noise Study contract as part of the General Plan 2040 Update process with additional work to carry over into 2024.

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Chamber of Commerce:
 www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
 www.orindaassociation.org

City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way
Planning Commission
 Wednesday, April 10, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, April 10, 6:30 p.m.
 Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

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Most entries, biggest audience for annual high school art competition awards

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda Library Auditorium was standing room only on Thursday, March 14, as the awards to the winners of the annual Lamorinda Arts Council High School Visual Arts Competition were announced. The competition was open to all high school students who either live or attend school in Lamorinda and/or the Acalanes Union High School District, which includes Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek. This year, students were limited to submitting one piece of work per category, but could enter multiple categories.

The categories are 2D, including painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media, and collage; 3D, including ceramics, sculpture, jewelry, and construction; Photography, including traditional film and digital photography; and Digital Art, sponsored by the Lamorinda Arts Alliance, which was defined as, "two-dimensional artwork produced or manipulated on a computer platform and then printed on paper, canvas, or other material. The artwork may be an original digital painting, a digital graphic or illustration, or a photo image that has been manipulated beyond enhancement or applying effect to a photograph." Use of artificial intelligence software was prohibited.

The awards conferred cash prizes in Best

of Show (\$250), First Place (\$250), Second Place (\$150) and Third Place (\$50), while honorable mention winners were given certificates. There were more than 250 submissions for the competition, which is believed to be a competition high. Professionals with experience in the categories judged the competition based on content; creativity and originality; and degree of expertise in the chosen medium.

The Best in Show award went to an acrylic ink work entitled *Ego* by Emily Bennett, an 11th grade student at Acalanes, teacher Robert Porter.

2D awards went to First Place: *True Forms*, ink fineliner, by Benjamin Wang, 12 grade, Head-Royce Upper School, artwork created independently; Second Place: *Middleman*, oil paint, charcoal, by Joseph Pak, 12th grade, College Preparatory School, artwork created independently; and Third Place: *Girls Night In*, graphite and colored pencil, by Vivian Tolajian, 11th grade, Campolindo High School, teacher, Justin Seligman.

3D honors were awarded to First Place: *Juliet*, Ceramics, by Gabriella Bertot, 12th grade, Miramonte High School, teacher: Gavin Kermode; Second Place: *The Real Gavel*, clay, acrylic paint, by Toby Largier, 12th grade, Bentley Upper School, teacher: Joanne Ludwig; and Third Place: *The Acquainted*, mixed media, by Noah Hevel, 12th grade, Acalanes Center for Independent Study, teacher: Raquel Hallquist.

In Photography, First



Emily Bennett receiving her Best in Show award



Joseph Pak First Place in Digital Art Photos Josephine Sabolboro

Place went to: *A Boy and his Camera*, Nikon DSLR, by Sol Dente, 12th grade, Campolindo High School, teacher Collette Sweeney; Second Place *Sustenance*, Canon Rebel T7 with an 18-55 lens, by Jackson Oliver, 12th Grade, Campolindo High School, Teacher Collette Sweeney; and Third Place: *Seeing Double*, black & white film by Amara Coughlin, 11th grade, Bentley Upper School, teacher Aram Muksian.

In Digital Art: First Place went to: *Human Nature*, Ink, digital overlay, by Joseph Pak, 12th grade, College Preparatory School, Artwork created independently; Sec-

ond Place: *Indulgence*, digital, by Grace Franklin, 12th grade, Campolindo High School, teacher: Justin Seligman; and Third Place: *Morning Paper*, Procreate, by Vivian Tolajian, 11th grade, Campolindo High School, teacher: Justin Seligman.

The following Honorable Mentions were also awarded: for 2D honorable mentions were *Daydreaming*, acrylic paint & ink pen, by Lucy Dell, 11th grade, Las Lomas High School, teacher Anne Scallion and *Keppra*, acrylic and thread on paper, by Sadie Poole, 11th grade, Acalanes High School, teacher: Robert Porter.

3D honorable mentions went to: *Fragile Rage*, ceramics, glaze & acrylic paint, by Amelia Adams-Brace, 12th grade, Miramonte High School, teacher Gavin Kermode and *Imperfect Life*, ceramics, by Olivia Sully, 10th grade, Bentley Upper School, artwork created independently.

Photography: *The Man on 12th*, Injet print Tobin Haas-Dehejia, 12th Grade, Bentley Upper School, teacher Aram Muksian and *Swirl*, slow shutter speed photography by Albert Bai, 10th grade Bentley upper school teacher, Aram Muksian.

In the Digital Art category honorable mentions were given to *Hiding the Hare*, Procreate-soft chalk, round brush, by Matisse Smith Vuong, 12th grade, Campolindo High School, teacher: Justin Seligman, and *Hope*, digital by Anisa Huthman, 11th grade, Las Lomas High School, Artwork created independently.

The competition was sponsored by Bentley School, Lamorinda Arts Alliance, and John & JoAnn Baker. Cash awards totaled \$2,050. All entries will remain on display in the Orinda Library Gallery until April 6.

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Proposed rules on fire insurance rates looks at mitigation, allow increases

By Sora O'Doherty

California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara on March 14 released a catastrophe modeling regulation, which he says will help to restore fire insurance options for all Californians. The Department of Insurance (CDI) will hold a public workshop on April 23 to receive public input before submitting the regulation for approval by the Office of Administrative Law. Interested persons may attend virtually and will be allowed to comment. The CDI says that the announcement

keeps California on track for a December 2024 goal of enacting the state's largest insurance reform in over 30 years.

According to a press release from the CDI, this represents the latest phase of the Commissioner's sustainable insurance strategy to "safeguard the integrity of the state's insurance market." Outdated regulations have limited insurers to applying a catastrophe factor to insurance rates based only on past wildfire losses, whereas the new regula-

tions will allow the use of catastrophe modeling based on "the best available scientific information on risk mitigation at the property, community, and landscape scales, including risk mitigation initiated by local and regional utility companies."

The proposed regulations are intended to have the benefits of more reliable insurance rates, greater availability of insurance, stronger oversight, and safer communities owing to the fact that catastrophe models can capture efforts to

mitigate the exposure of communities to catastrophic events, "encouraging and rewarding those efforts."

Catastrophic insurance losses are defined as those that are larger and affect multiple policyholders as a result of a severe event, such as a wildfire affecting dozens of homes compared to a common house fire. The CDI states that for more than 30 years, California regulations have allowed insurance companies to apply a catastrophe factor to insurance rates

based on historical wildfire losses. "These outdated rules have contributed to rate spikes and balloon premiums following major wildfire disasters without fully accounting for the growing risk caused by climate change or risk mitigation measures taken by communities or regionally, as a result of local, state, and federal investments," the CDI press release maintains.

The CDI notes that the proposed regulation complies with California's strong consumer protection laws, and requires insurance companies seeking rate changes

to provide a complete rate application with all information required for review. The proposed regulation creates a new process for review of models by a panel of experts overseen by the CDI before insurance companies can use them in a rate filing. The panel would evaluate the appropriateness and soundness of each model and a CDI official would determine what information about the model must be included in rate applications. Any member of the public will be able to participate in the review of catastrophe models.

The draft of the catastrophe modeling rule can be viewed at
www.insurance.ca.gov/0250-insurers/0500-legal-info/0300-workshop-insurers/upload/Catastrophe-Modeling-and-Ratemaking-Workshop-Draft-Text-of-Regulation.pdf
The invitation to the public workshop can be found at
www.insurance.ca.gov/0250-insurers/0500-legal-info/0300-workshop-insurers/upload/Catastrophe-Modeling-and-Ratemaking-Invitation-to-Workshop.pdf

Entries now being accepted for 2024 Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest

By Sora O'Doherty

The Friends of the Orinda Library announced the start of the 2024 Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest, open to all students who reside and/or attend high school in Orinda.

Entry Categories are Science Fiction/Fantasy, Essay/Memoir/Biography, Poetry, and Short Story. Students may submit one entry in any of the four

categories for a total of not more than three entries. The submission deadline is midnight on Friday, April 12.

Entries will be judged by a panel of local judges who are involved professionally in reading, writing, or publishing. Awards will go to the works judged best. There will not necessarily be one award in each

category. Up to four winners will each be awarded \$500 prizes at the end of the school year, underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library. The winning entries will be posted on the Friends' website.

The contest is named in honor of the late Poul Anderson, a popular science-fiction writer and

Orinda resident, who was a true friend to the community for 40 years.

Entries must be submitted as PDFs or Word attachments to an email sent along with a contest entry form to contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org. No Google Doc or Dropbox links will be accepted.

Any questions about the contest may be submitted by email to contest@friendsoftheorindalibrary.org. Entry forms may be obtained from <https://friendsoftheorindalibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-fol-writing-contest-entry-form.pdf>

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Red Cross honored for local work

By Sora O'Doherty

In recognition of American Red Cross month, the Orinda City Council honored the group with a proclamation acknowledging their work in Contra Costa County. The proclamation was accepted by Ted Leong, who highlighted the many important projects that are ongoing in the County. Leong shared some statistics about what the Red Cross has accomplished in the County in the past year.

"With the help of over a thousand volunteers throughout the county, we have assisted or responded to 115 disasters, installed 583 free smoke alarms in homes making 205 homes safer, trained 577 individuals and families about fire prevention, (and) trained 617 youth through the Pillow Case and Prepare with Pedro projects," Leong explained. In addition, the Red Cross hosted 538 blood drives and col-

lected almost 17,000 units of life-saving blood from county residents.

Leong went on, "We trained 6,522 residents in first Aid, CPR and AED [Automated External Defibrillator], and we helped 756 military members and their families receive support and services." The Red Cross could not have done all of this and more, he said, without the partnership they have with individuals, businesses, and government agencies, including the city of Orinda, which he thanked for its continued support.

He ended his remarks by saying, "I hope you are also proud of the fact that the American Red Cross is a good steward of public funds, where 90 cents of every dollar that we receive is spent on support and services to fulfill our mission."

The Pillowcase Project is a preparedness

education program for grades 3-5 that teaches students about personal and family preparedness and safety skills, local hazards, and basic coping skills. Prepare with Pedro is a 30- to 45-minute preparedness education program for grades K-2 that teaches students how to be prepared and take action for either home fires or a local hazard and complements the Pillowcase Project.

Speaking on behalf of the city, Mayor Darlene Gee thanked Leong, saying, "It's a pleasure to have you with us here tonight, and I think in today's world where we receive so much bad news and so many sad and negative things, you are a wonderful reminder tonight of how many people contribute so many good things to our community." She included in her thanks the many volunteers of the American Red Cross.

Spring egg hunt Saturday, March 30

Every year on the Saturday before Easter, Orinda Rotary sponsors a Spring Egg Hunt for toddlers and children up to age 7 at the Orinda Community Park. It has been described as the most exciting 30 seconds of the year in Orinda! Hundreds of eggs are scattered around the park for the children to gather in their baskets. Most eggs contain a small prize, but a few contain a certificate for a much larger prize – a giant basket filled with candies and toys. In addition to the egg hunt, there will be games and refreshments, plus photos with the Orinda Big Spring Bunny! The event begins promptly at 11 a.m. and egg hunters are well advised to not be late. —S. O'Doherty



Photo S. O'Doherty

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If interested in taking advantage of this great opportunity to purchase packages of 5, 15, or 55 gallon drums for water storage along with drum wrenches and pumps, area residents can place an order through Lamorinda CERT Foundation. Details, prices, and pickup information can be found on this site.

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Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,
 I am writing this letter in response to Sora O'Doherty's article on the recent high speed chase after the armed robbery of the Jack in the Box. The tone of the reporter's article suggested the officers may have done something wrong by pursuing the subjects. I would like to comment that the commitment to our community and the dedication of Lafayette's officers is the very reason that Lafayette has been able to remain a safe community. We have not experienced the same amounts of violent crime as other local areas and this is all due to the reputation that the police officers in Lafayette simply will not tolerate violent criminal acts locally. I applaud the dedication and efforts of these officers and all the other members of the department that continue to show up. As a 20+ year citizen of Lafayette I am grateful for their efforts and I hope that they continue. Support our local officers rather than demeaning and questioning their efforts. Please continue to work so hard in the fight against these violent criminals in order to keep us safe. Thank you Lafayette PD. Richard Shinaman, M.D.

Dear Lamorinda Weekly Editor:
 Thank you for publishing an article on the Feb. 28 high speed chase from Lafayette to Orinda in your March 13, 2024 edition. I write to add additional perspective on the incident.

I am a parent of two elementary school children who attend Wagner Ranch Elementary School in Orinda. I was saddened to learn that the Feb. 28 high speed chase from Lafayette resulted in an injury collision involving a seven year-old child. I hope the

child and all impacted make a full recovery. The article failed to note, however, that the crash took place adjacent to Wagner Ranch Elementary School's entrance (at the corner of Camino Pablo Road and Bear Creek Road). Had the Contra Costa County Sheriff-led pursuit occurred just 30 minutes earlier, hundreds of elementary school students would have just been dismissed from class, dozens of whom walk home from school daily along Camino Pablo (including my own children). As Camino Pablo Road nears the elementary school, it transitions from a four-lane road to a two lane, narrow winding road with a 30 mph speed limit. Along much of the route, there are no barriers protecting the walking path from vehicles. Elementary school children cross Camino Pablo at multiple crosswalks as they make their way home from school each day. Our community is incredibly lucky that this ill-advised pursuit did not end in greater tragedy.

I am appalled and frankly outraged that the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office offered no comment as to why its officers deemed it safe or appropriate to engage in what I understand to be an upwards of 70 mph chase past an elementary school on a school day. I implore community members, including our City Council, to demand accountability. The steep costs of high-speed pursuits have been well-documented, and the consensus is clear that the benefits rarely outweigh the risks. Carri Maas Orinda

Dear Editor,
 Reading the article writ-

ten by Sora O'Doherty was reminiscent of news from the old Southern newspapers. It is unthinkable & a disgrace to read that the suspects were a "24 year-year-old Black male and a 39-year-old Black female.." What color were the police?

O'Doherty's next article will probably mention the religion and ethnic background of perpetrators..

This article is a betrayal of the social justice for which so many have worked and by printing this letter you are abetting the perpetuation of and sanctioning such heinous language. Sincerely, Gloria Marchick Orinda

Non-natives
 As a Contra Costa College Biology Professor, I wanted to provide a clarification to the article "The Garden Melting Pot" published on March 13, 2024. Cynthia Brian stated "Many revered non-natives have acclimated to our soil, weather, and stressors providing food and refuge for our insects, wildlife, and birds while living in harmony with native species." While it is true that many non-natives thrive in our ecosystem, it is not necessarily true that they live in harmony with native species. Ecosystems consist of delicate food webs with producers and consumers that have evolved together for thousands of years and non-natives can disrupt this delicate web. Some consumers only survive on a very small selection of native species. I would encourage everyone to plant as many native species as possible. Thanks, Suzanne Sparacio MATSci, PhD Moraga

Congressional art competition winner will be flown to DC for reception

By Sora O'Doherty

Each year, Representative Mark DeSaulnier hosts the 10th Congressional District High School Art Competition and Exhibition. The exhibition is a judged art show, open to high school students from public and private schools in the 10th Congressional District of California, as well as high school students home-schooled within the district. The 10th Congressional district includes Lamorinda. This year, DeSaulnier's office has announced that the winner of the competition will receive two tickets on Southwest Airlines to attend the reception in Washington D.C.

The exhibition will be displayed publicly and will culminate in a

closing awards event. The winning artwork of our district's competition will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol. The exhibit in Washington will include the winning artwork from all participating districts from around the country. The winning artwork will also be featured on the Congressional Art Competition page. Participants may submit one photograph or scan of their artwork, taken in the highest possible resolution, to kaylee.de-land@mail.house.gov. Submissions must include the Student Release Form. A panel of judges will view all artwork electronically. Congressman DeSaulnier's office will be accepting

virtual submissions until April 5 at 5 p.m. Artwork entered in the contest may be up to 26 inches by 26 inches, may be up to 4 inches in depth, and not weigh more than 15 pounds. The winning piece must arrive framed and must still measure no larger than the above maximum dimensions. Competition categories include paintings, drawings, two dimensional collages, prints, mixed media, computer-generated art and photography. All entries must be original in concept, design and execution and may not violate any U.S. copyright laws. The rules for the 2024 competition are available on House.gov.

For more information, please contact DeSaulnier's office at (925) 933-2660 or go to the website, www.house.gov/educators-and-students/congressional-art-competition

Public Safety

Emergency response:
 Emergency: 24 Hours 911
 Police Dispatch: 24 Hours
 925-284-5010
 Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 925-283-3680
 Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt
 925-299-3221
 Police Department Tip Line
 94549Tip@gmail.com
 Police Department Traffic Issues
 94549Traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department:
 329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
 Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
 22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
 Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan
 925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report March 3 - March 9

Alarms	22
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	50
Suspicious Circumstances	4
Suspicious Subject	9
Suspicious Vehicle	1
Service to Citizen	12
Patrol Req./Security Check	10
Public/School Assembly Check	3
Supplemental Report	7
Vacation House Check	8
Welfare Check	6
Ordinance Violation	1
Vehicle violations	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Rosedale Ave./Moraga Rd.	
Reckless Driving	
Glenside Dr./Burton Dr.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24	
Stolen Vehicle Recovery	
Oakhill/	
Tc - Property Damage	
900 Block Brown Ave.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Vehicle Theft	
30 Block Crest Rd.	
Other criminal activity	
Fraud False Pretenses	
1000 Block Via Baja	
Petty Theft	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
Petty Theft Other	
3500 Block Wildwood Ln.	
Shoplift	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Nuisance to the Community	
Disturbance-domestic	
3100 Block Lucas Cir.	
Loud Motorcycle	
St Marys Rd./Rohrer Dr.	
Loud Noise	
4100 Block Hidden Valley Rd.	
80 Block Lafayette Cir.	
1700 Block Ivanhoe Ave.	
Loud Party	
3200 Block Camino Colorados	
Public Nuisance	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Vandalism	
200 Block Lafayette Cir.	
Other	
Loitering	

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Trespass
 1200 Block Laurel Ln.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Unwanted Guest
 10 Block Mountain View Pl.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report March 5 - March 18

Alarms	12
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	11
Traffic	60
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	2
Suspicious Vehicle	5
Service to Citizen	13
Patrol Req./Security Check	21
Public/School Assembly Check	6
Supplemental Report	6
Vacation House Check	1
Welfare Check	3
Ordinance Violation	2
Vehicle violations	
Accident Property	
Broadway/Hardy Dr.	
200 Block Sharp Dr.	
10 Block Corliss Dr.	
Alta Mesa Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Excessive Speed	
Cameon/Sanders	
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.	
Canyon Rd. at Moraga Way	
Woodford Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Moraga Way/Coral Dr., Ori	
Moraga Way/School St. (2)	
Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd. (2)	
Rheem Blvd./Zander Dr., Ori	
St Andrews Dr./Moraga Way	
Moraga Rd./Woodford Dr.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
Reckless Driving	
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Seven Eleven	
Joseph Dr./Bollinger Canyon Rd. (2)	
Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr.	
Moraga Way/Moraga Rd.	
Moraga Rd./Donald Dr.	
MOFD Station 41	
Joaquin Moraga Int School	
Tamper With Vehicle	
Canyon Rd./Constance Pl.	
Tc - Property Damage	
Rheem Blvd./Center St.	
Other criminal activity	
Fraud Credit Card	
900 Block Augusta Dr.	
Fraud False Pretenses	
200 Block Scofield Dr.	
Not Available	
1800 Block Ascot Dr.	
Grand Theft	
400 Block Center St.	
Identity Theft	
900 Block Camino Ricardo	
Petty Theft	
Safeway	
Shoplift	
Safeway	
Cvs	
Nuisance to the Community	
Loud Noise	
1200 Block Larch Ave.	
Seven Eleven	
Loud Party	
300 Block Redfield Pl.	
Mid Block Ascot Ct.	
Ascot Ct./Ascot Dr.	
50 Block Campolindo Ct.	
Public Nuisance	
Viader Dr./Country Club Dr.	
Vandalism	
1000 Block Wickham Dr.	

Other
 Defraud Innkeeper
 500 Block Center St.
 Loitering
 Camino Pablo Rd School
 Mentally Ill Commit
 100 Block Donald Dr.

ORINDA POLICE

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Feb. 25 - March 9

Alarms	32
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	14
Traffic	75
Suspicious Circumstances	7
Suspicious Subject	9
Suspicious Vehicle	8
Service to Citizen	68
Patrol Req./Security Check	21
Public/School Assembly Check	2
Supplemental Report	17
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	10
Ordinance Violation	2
Vehicle violations	
Reckless Driving	
10 Block Los Altos Rd.	
Camino Sobrante	
Theatre Square	
Vehicle Theft	
Orinda Way	
Camino Sobrante, Ori	
Other criminal activity	
Computer Fraud	
10 Block Hartford Rd.	
Elder Abuse	
Altarinda Rd.	
Grand Theft	
Lomas Cantadas/Grizzly Peak Blvd.	
El Nido Ranch Rd./Charles Hill Rd.	
Identity Theft	
10 Block Stanton Ct.	
Petty Theft	
10 Block Fiddleneck Way	
Shoplift	
Camino Sobrante	
Theft Access Card	
100 Block Lombardy Ln.	
Police Department	
Warrant Arrest	
Orinda Way	
Moraga Way (3)	
20 Block Carisbrook Dr	
10 Block El Caminito	
30 Block Big Rock Rd.	
Nuisance to the Community	
Disturbing The Peace	
10 Block Kittiwake Rd.	
Drunk In Public	
Camino Pablo	
Public Nuisance	
Moraga Way (3)	
Vandalism	
20 Block Bryant Way	
Moraga Way	
Monkeyflower Ln./Twig Ln.	
100 Block Moraga Way	
Other	
Animal Cruelty	
Miner Rd./Gardiner Ct.	
Brandishing Weapon	
Bart Orinda Station	
Failure To Obey	
Moraga Way	
Fireworks	
100 Block Orchard Rd.	
Mentally Ill Commit	
Moraga Way/Brookwood Rd.	
Other Felony	
Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way	
Trespass	
Camino Sobrante	

Camino Pablo flagpole renewal Submitted by Larry Jacobs

Taking advantage of the holiday break, the very worn flagpole in front of Camino Pablo Elementary school in Moraga was reconditioned by the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley. Over a four-day period the pole was safely lowered, scraped and sanded, coated many times with protective paints, and safety raised. The reconditioned Camino Pablo flagpole is back on duty.



Photo provided

Not to be missed

Art

A vibrant exhibit, "Moving Energy," debuts at the Moraga Art Gallery, 432 Center Street in the Rheem Shopping Center on Wednesday, March 20. With a free public reception on Saturday, April 6 from 5 to 7 p.m. Open daily, Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 5 p.m., the gallery invites art fans of all ages to come in, browse, and linger a while. www.moragaart-gallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

The Lafayette Public Art Committee showcases the mesmerizing world of painter Michael Robinson in the exhibition, "The Spirits of Babylon," at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Immerse yourself in his works' vibrant hues and enigmatic symbolism. From abstract figurative to modern surrealist styles, Robinson's artwork reflects the influences of Kandinsky, Miro, Warhol, Klee, and Basquiat. The exhibit runs through May 19 and is open to the public during library hours. Admis-

sion is free. 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

Music

World premiere of Transfigurations, a choral and instrumental 6 part suite commissioned specially for Chromatica by multiple Grammy winning composer Christopher Tin, with lyrics by Charles Anthony Silvestri. Concerts are on Saturday, April 27 at 7 p.m. at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church at 399 Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek, and at on Sunday April 28 at 4 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church at 3201 Camino Tassajara in Danville. Both concerts include a wine reception with tickets, and the composer and lyricist will be in attendance both days. Tickets and more information are at www.chromatica-chorale.org.

Front Porch Presents: Folk Music Festival at Town Hall Theatre Co, 3535 School Street, Lafayette on April 5 at 7 p.m. Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door www.townhalltheatre.com/front-porch

Pacific Chamber Orchestra (PCO), Lawrence Kohl, Music Director, is presenting Bruch Violin Concerto #1 in g minor with violinist Livia Sohn, Mendelssohn Symphony #3 "Scottish" and Fanny Mendelssohn Overture for Orchestra

Saturday April 27, 7:30 p.m. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church and Sunday, April 28, 3 p.m. Bankhead Theater, Livermore. Purchase tickets at PacificChamberOrchestra.org

Rhinestone: The Songs of Glen Campbell at Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette on April 12 at 7 p.m. With classics like Wichita Lineman, Gentle on My Mind, By The Time I Get to Phoenix and Rhinestone Cowboy, it's sure to be a fun tribute! Tickets: General in advance \$20, General at the door \$25, VIP \$30. www.townhalltheatre.com/rhinestone

California Symphony presents Brahms Obsessions on Saturday, May 4, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., at Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. California Symphony presents a program of Brahms, Clara Schumann, and a world premiere by Saad Haddad. The concert features pianist Robert Thies. Cost: \$20-\$90. For more info see www.californiasymphony.org/ or call (925) 280-2490 or email info@californiasymphony.org.

Literature

Join the Sweet Thursday Author Series on Thursday, April 18 at 7 p.m. in the

Don Tatzin CH at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center to hear author Adam Plantinga discuss his book, The Ascent. This is a free event, but registration is required at Tinyurl.com/sweet-April2024. The doors will be open at 6:30 p.m. for coffee and treats. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Lafayette Library.

Art Embraces Poetry: A Call for Poets; Celebrate National Poetry Month on Saturday, April 6, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette. Poetry lovers are invited to attend the program. A No Host Bar is open during the event. Poets read for 10 minutes followed by a short Q&A. Artist Michael Robinson speaks about and exhibits his acrylic paintings thanks to the Lafayette Public Art Committee artist program. A reception follows in the theatre lobby. Visit <https://LamorindaArts.org/art-embraces-words>

Pat's Book Club meeting on Thursday, April 24 at 11 a.m. will discuss Between Two Kingdoms by Suleika Jaouad, a deeply moving memoir of illness and recovery that traces one young woman's journey from diagnosis to remission to re-entry into "normal" life. Pat's Book Club meets at Orinda Books 276 Village Square, Orinda, (925) 254-7606, on the first Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. and welcomes new members.

In celebration of California Native Plants month, Helen Popper, author of California Native Gardening, will discuss her book, a month-by-month guide to gardening with native plants on Saturday, April 20, at 2 p.m. Popper shows how by following California's unique, untraditional seasonal rhythm, home gardeners can have success incorporating native plants in their gardens. This is a free event, register at www.eventbrite.com/e/helen-popper-author-of-california-native-gardening-tickets-833924920887?aff=oddtcreator Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda (925) 254-7606

Other

Community Egg Scramble will be held by the Lafayette Rotary Club of Lafayette at Plaza Park in downtown Lafayette on Saturday, March 30 at 10 a.m. All kids through second grade are invited to this egg hunt in the Park.

Orinda Rotary sponsors a Spring Egg Hunt for toddlers and children up to age 7 on March 30 at 11 a.m. at the Orinda Community Park, next to the Orinda Library. The event begins promptly at 11 a.m., egg hunters are well advised to not be late.

Lamorinda Movers, a social organization for adults 55+, will hold their April meeting on Monday, April 8 at the Serbian Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Cocktails begin at 5 p.m. buffet dinner featuring chicken piccata, vegetarian option - pasta salad, and creme brulee dessert. Music entertainment provided by Mark Shaw. \$40. for members, \$45. for guests. Reservations required; go to <https://lamorindamovers.org/reservations> to sign up, or phone (925) 376-6622.

Help support local youth group 4 O'Clock (Juniors and Seniors from Acalanes, Campo and Los Lomas) who have been picked to sing the national anthem on Youth Performance Day at the Giants vs Pirates Game on April 25 at 1:05 pm. Discounted tickets can be purchased here: <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/40ClockQuartet>. First 7500 14-and-under attendees will be receiving a FREE Giants T-shirt. The game is at Oracle Park in SF.

Sustainable Lafayette's free annual Earth Day Festival is on April 21, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Plaza Park, 3530 Plaza Way, Lafayette. Support Girls Crushing It!, Project Earth, Seeds4Bees, Lamorinda 4-H petting zoo and kid activities by Lafayette Youth Commission and All Ages Play! Free bike adjustments hosted by Sharp Bicycle and more!

Garden

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase. See Your Neighbors' Native Plant Gardens and Electrified Homes! Four days of inspiration: Online and In-person. Online Garden Tour, April 6 & 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. In-person Garden Tour, May 4 & 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. See how 60 of your neighbors have greened their gardens with California native plants, and learn how they have electrified their homes. Free. Registration is required here. www.bringingbackthenatives.net

The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its free monthly meeting on Monday, April 8 at the The Gardens at Heather Farms in Walnut Creek. Join for a special program "Spring-time" Spring Wreaths, Spring Baskets, Spring Vases And Spring Forward To Mother's Day Ideas. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by a brief meeting, social time and an educational program. Complimentary tea, coffee & snacks are available. This meeting will be held at the The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr, Walnut Creek.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA. 24,000 printed copies; delivered to homes in Lamorinda.

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FREE ESTIMATES

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Lamorinda's Religious Services

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422
www.holyshepherd.org

Special Easter services are Maundy Thursday (March 28 7pm), Good Friday (March 29 7pm), and Easter Sunday (March 31 8:30am and 10am).

WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/
Visit our website to access the current and recent sermons.

JOIN US
SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM
OR ONLINE AT MVPCTODAY.ORG

10 Irwin Way, Orinda | 925.254.4906 | www.orindachurch.org
"No matter who you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!"

Sunday Service 10 am or join us online.
Mondays 9:30 am Centering Prayer in the Chapel
Wednesday 10 am Contemplative Worship in the Chapel

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
WE WELCOME ALL!
Sundays, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette
Zoom Link for 10 a.m. service at www.stanselms.us

ORINDA CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
24 Orinda Way (next to the Library)-925-254-4212
Sunday Services and Sunday School 10-11 am
Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm
All are welcome
www.christianscienceorinda.org

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY SOUL FORUM | 8:30AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP | 9:30AM
IN PERSON OR FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM

WWW.OSLC.NET | FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM
1025 CAROL LANE, LAFAYETTE, CA 94549 | 925.283.3722 | SPRINT@OSLC.NET

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Please join us for our Easter Sunday services with music and scripture inspired by Jesus Christ and His Atonement. All are welcome!

March 31st at 10am
3776 Via Granda
Moraga, CA 94556

* Please join us the week prior on Saturday, March 23rd for a children's Easter egg hunt at 8:45am followed by a breakfast at 9am

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church

A welcoming and loving community of faith that learns, grows, and serves

TOGETHER

Sundays 10:00 a.m. In person & Livestream

49 Knox Drive • Lafayette, CA

LOPC.ORG

Lafayette United Methodist Church
955 Moraga Road 925.284.4765 thelumc.org
invites you to join us

March 24th at 10am for Palm Sunday Service
March 28th anytime between 11:30am -6:30pm to walk our Maundy Thursday meditation labyrinth in the Fellowship Hall
March 29th at 6:30pm for our Good Friday Service
March 31st for Easter Sunday Service at 8:30 and 10:30 With a Brunch and an Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30

Spice up snack time with festive lemon hummus

By Susie Iventosch



Lemon hummus

Photos Susie Iventosch

Hummus is such a wholesome, nutritious, and delicious snack, and there are so many amazing ways to prepare it! You can add herbs and different spices, or you can make it with jalapeño peppers, red peppers, or even with various kinds of beans. You can add nuts or olives or simply use your imagination to produce your own concoctions. Serve it with pita bread or chips, raw veggies, or spoon it onto your plate as a condiment to other dishes you plan to serve.

Our friend and fellow food blogger Lee, of The Rogue Brussel Sprout, makes a ton of different hummus recipes, and they always

look so beautiful in her photos! Her culinary creations blend the line between food and art, as she pays meticulous attention to detail and a harmonious balance of flavors, textures, and colors. They are truly edible masterpieces!

Recently she turned us on to her Loaded Lemon Hummus and we made it for a dinner party to great fanfare! She uses lots of lemon and she sometimes adds a ranch herb blend. But the key to her hummus is the use of lemon zest, which makes it super fresh and lemony. Then, she garnishes the top of the hummus with a variety of micro greens, sliced veggies, and nuts.

It makes a gorgeous presentation. When we made ours, we used cherry tomatoes, micro arugula, Kalamata olives, cucumbers, and banana peppers on top. It's a fancy and festive party dip.

The nice thing about hummus is that the recipes are very flexible. So, if you love tahini, you can add more tahini, and

if you love salt, you can add more salt, and if you're a big garlic fan, add just a little more garlic! The one thing we always strive for is very creamy puree of the garbanzo beans and a balance of flavors. I find that adding a little ice-cold water as you puree the garbanzo beans helps to make it smooth. Just add a little at a time be-

cause you do not want it to get too watered down. Some people swear by the Vitamix blender or the the Ninja, but we just use our mini food processor, and it does the job just fine. I usually need to blend the garbanzo beans in batches, but it still works great.

To make the little canals in the hummus that hold the olive oil,

simply use the back of a spoon starting at the outside of the bowl and make a swirly pattern towards the center. You can dip the spoon in water first to make it glide more easily through the hummus in your serving bowl. Then decorate away with garnishes of your choosing.

Please visit The Rogue Brussel Sprout for her Loaded Lemon Hummus and more of her recipes: www.theroguebrusselsprout.com/recipes/loaded-lemon-hummus#recipe-card Treks & Bites Ranch Revolution herb blend is now available at Diablo Foods in Lafayette.

Festive Lemon Hummus

INGREDIENTS

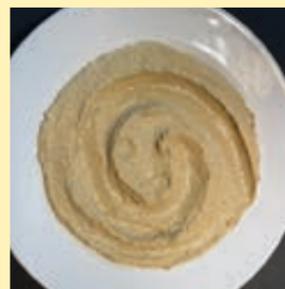
- 2-3 tbsp. tahini
- 2 15-oz. cans chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- 1/4 cup ice cold water (more or less as needed)
- 1-2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon zest
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. lemon pepper
- 1 tsp. ranch herb blend
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Garnishes: extra olive oil, micro arugula, cherry tomatoes, Kalamata olives, banana peppers, cucumber

DIRECTIONS

Place tahini in the bowl of your food processor and process for about one minute. Add garbanzo beans, a little at a time, and continue to process until smooth. Add a little bit of water as needed. If you need to do this in batches, you can remove the pureed beans and place them in a separate bowl until you have finished; then add them all back to the processor before adding the garlic, lemon juice, lemon zest, spices, and olive oil. Blend all together until very smooth.

Remove the hummus to a serving bowl. Smooth the top with a spoon or rubber spatula. Using the back of a spoon, make a swirling pattern from the outside of the bowl towards the center. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

When you are ready to serve, drizzle extra olive oil into the well you made with the spoon and arrange the garnishes on the remaining part of the hummus. Serve with pita bread, chips, or crudites.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website:

www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Miramonte and Campolindo Open Mic sparks connection among teen poets

By Emma Wong



Miramonte sophomore Elise Vansant speaks from her poem, "Oftentimes."

"Next up," calls Campolindo senior Laurel Tringe, "reading his slam poetry piece about hip-hop... Vinny Yu!" It's 6 p.m. at the Miramonte library. Sophomore Yu steps onstage. Taps the mic. Takes a breath—and launches into his performance, a riveting blend of rhythm and rhyme.

On Friday, March 1, Miramonte and Campolindo's writing clubs hosted their first joint Open Mic, spotlighting teen voices and celebrat-

ing the joys of creative writing. The mic also announced winners of the Miramonte-Campolindo writing contest.

Two years ago, Tringe—president of Campolindo's Poetry and Creative Writing Club (PAC)—began messaging over social media with Emma Wong, Miramonte junior and leader of its Writer's Magazine club. The two decided to host a cross-school writing contest followed by the Open Mic, where winners of the contest would be announced and gifts awarded.

"We planned to hold the mic last year but never made a concrete plan: this year, we were able to organize with a bigger group," Tringe said.

Several staff joined the planning effort, including Miramonte juniors Aya Minn and Olivia Shin, sophomore Kaia Bonham, and Campolindo sophomore Lauren Kawamoto. The writing contest welcomed submissions from every genre, including

poetry, short story, and essay. PAC and Writer's Magazine staff hung up posters around campus and reached out to English teachers, requesting them to judge submissions.

Miramonte instructor Amy Krochmal volunteered as one of four judges. "I was so excited to participate," Krochmal said. "It's an honor, because students often shy away from sharing personal writing with teachers."

In late February, contest submissions closed and Open Mic preparation began. Running a tight schedule, staff secured a wireless mic stand from Miramonte's theater and designed custom T-shirts for contest winners. Meanwhile, contest judges reviewed students' work for a total of 20 submissions.

Olivia Shin is Writer's Magazine's design coordinator, who assisted with publicity leading up to the event. "We did a lot of Zoom and FaceTime calls," Shin

said. "We organized tasks, like advertising and shirt designing, on a Google Doc, where our opening speech was also written."

March 1 proved a challenging date. Rain poured in torrents; as staff arrived with tables and pizza, the library's awning provided a safe haven from the storm. With a swim meet running parallel, some student-athletes could not guarantee their attendance.

Despite initial roadblocks, the staff persevered. In the library, a projector displayed quotes from contest submissions and headshots of their authors. Quiet music filled the room while attendees poured in.

Anyone could volunteer to read a two-minute excerpt of a creative work. Miramonte junior Catherine Hu was first in line, reading her poem "ABACADABA," a poem on the theme of magic.

"My agreeing to be the first speaker was a decision I made on impulse—so, initially, I was



Photos Ava Skidgel

Open Mic participants, including Elizabeth Perlman (right), clap after a speaking performance.

a bit intimidated," Hu said. "However, the positive atmosphere of the event made it a lot less stressful."

A total of 12 speakers read aloud, including Campolindo sophomore Isabelle Culinco, who read from her meditative piece "Sometimes."

"I found out about the Open Mic in our school's weekly emails," Culinco said. "I wanted to share my poem with others who would appreciate it in a different way than those who didn't write poetry."

Speakers performed their poems, stories, and essays in a variety of ways. Sophomore Yu, drawing from his experi-

ence in public speaking, ran through his slam piece about the birth of hip-hop. Senior Mika Strickler performed her poem, "Reasons for Driving Dangerously on Return Home," in a lilting, near-humorous tone, articulating her thoughts via hand gestures. Junior Aerin Haro utilized her storytelling ability to read an excerpt from a longer piece, "Does True Love Exist?"

Subject matter played a key role in the delivery of each piece: some were science-fiction scenes brimming with action, while others were tender meditations on family relations.

... continued on Page 14

Standardized test-optional and blind policies - When should you submit your scores

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The COVID-19 pandemic brought on numerous changes within the standardized testing industry, many colleges shifting to a test-optional admissions process for the 2020-21 admissions cycle. Fast forward a few years and now nearly 1900 colleges and universities in the U.S. extended their test-optional policies through the 2023-24 application cycle, with some making the move to test-optional even longer or permanent. More recently, a certain few very selective schools have reinstated their standardized testing requirements. Even if these schools are not on your college list, it is worth considering the advantages and disadvantages of submitting test scores as other schools are likely to follow suit.

What Exactly is 'Test-

Optional' and How is it Different from 'Test Blind'?

Test-optional institutions do not require submission of standardized testing scores but will still accept and review SAT and ACT scores when evaluating your application, should you choose to submit them. In a test-blind admissions policy, which is much less common, even if you choose to submit your test scores, those scores will not factor into the application evaluation process. Rather than making it optional, a move that might make those unable to test feel disadvantaged, this approach eliminates testing as a consideration altogether.

Is the 'Test-Optional' Policy Here to Stay?

It's unclear how many colleges will choose

to adopt a test-optional policy permanently. Many schools, like Harvard University have committed to staying test-optional for the next few years. Some schools, like those in the University of California system have committed to remain test-blind for the foreseeable future, while Columbia University has implemented a permanent test-optional policy. On the other hand, some schools have already reinstated their testing requirements, like MIT, Dartmouth, Yale and most recently Brown.

Should I Still Submit My Scores to a College with a 'Test-Optional' Policy?

So that is the bingo question. A test-optional policy may work in your favor if you do not have the strongest test results, but the rest of your profile fits the school very

well; in this case, it is best to err on the side of caution and submit scores when you can. Although choosing to withhold standardized testing results does not initially hinder your application, it could mean the difference of admission between you and another strong candidate who did opt to submit results.

Some data indicates that even when schools say they are test optional they admit at a higher rate those who submit scores. My thought is that it adds one more important measure to the mix and schools prefer more objective measures of achievement to consider. I also think that when a school sees a strong test score from a student from underserved or otherwise challenged environments, they will take the student's envi-

ronmental context into account and may be more inclined to admit the applicant.

It is also important to consider that test scores are one of the most significant metrics used in calculating college rankings and colleges that adopt test-optional policies may favor candidates who submit scores for their own ranking purposes. After all, many ranking systems (including the one developed by U.S. News & World Report) will only factor in a certain percentage of their applicants submit them, and the methodology also includes how strong the admitted applicants test scores are. Thus, there is an advantage to schools that admit applicants with higher test scores.



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Lafayette Scout BSA Troop 402 welcomes 6 new Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Paul Espinas



Photo Provided

New Eagle Scouts of Troop 402 (L-R): Rain Damon-Espinas, Maureen Kang, Fiona Markey, Sienna Jorgensen, Jenna Steele, and Grace Chehlaoui

Boy Scouts of America Troop 402 of Lafayette proudly announces the remarkable achievement of six Life Scouts who

have recently attained the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. This distinction, earned by less than 6% of all Scouts BSA members,

is a reflection of their grit and leadership.

The Troop celebrated the following scouts at a recent Eagle Court of Honor:

Grace Chehlaoui, Senior at Acalanes High School. Grace's project team made fleece blankets which were donated to the Bay Area Ronald McDonald House. Grace writes "I am most grateful for Scouting giving me the ability to work with and guide younger Scouts and help them on their Scouting journey."

Rain Damon-Espinas, Senior at Campolindo High School. Rain's project team built a free-standing bulletin board at Joaquin Moraga Interme-

diated School. Rain writes "I am grateful for my family, my friends and my troop - they believed in me and supported me during this process, even when I didn't believe in myself."

Sienna Jorgensen, Junior at Campolindo High School. Sienna's project team assembled personalized mental health kits for families of hospitalized children. Sienna writes "I am most grateful for the Eagle scouts and youth leadership team of Troop 402, (who) are awesome role models of proud, bold, ambitious Eagle Scouts. I really do owe it to them for inspiring me to pursue the rank myself, in addition to

embarking on adventures in the backcountry that I will never forget."

Maureen Kang, Senior at Campolindo High School. Maureen's project team organized a book drive for the Children's Book project. Maureen expresses gratitude for "My family, who have supported me through my entire scouting journey, and my friends, who are always willing to lend a helping hand."

Fiona Markey, Junior at Campolindo High School. Fiona's project team made blankets for Project Linus, which supports hospitalized children. Fiona writes "I am grateful for all the support I received and

people I've met."

Jenna Steele, Senior at Acalanes High School. Jenna's project team ran a healthy lifestyle fair for participants of the Lafayette Reservoir Run. Jenna writes "I am most grateful for my parents who supported me throughout my scouting journey. I'm also grateful for my older brother who convinced me to join 402 in the first place."

The troop congratulates the newly minted Eagle Scouts and celebrates their journey of growth, camaraderie, and service to the community. More information about them can be found here: troop402.org

New troop 224 Eagle Scout announced

Submitted by Steve Dietsch



Photo John Sakamoto

From left: Keith Yamamura, Joshua Schmidt, Juzer Shipchandler, Dylan Potter, Braedon Christie and Nicolas Dietsch

Scouts BSA Troop 224 of Lafayette held an Eagle Court of Honor at the Creekside Commons for six Scouts who achieved Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout.

For his Eagle project, Keith Yasumura made a "Little Shared Library" to help his high school, Fusion Academy, build more community. Yasumura created a unique design for the "Little Shared Library" as a small barn to provide an additional draw and novelty to users.

Josh Schmidt improved the composting system at his local community garden in Lafayette. A new compost bin was built from recycled wood and metal, which could hold up to 500 pounds of organic waste. A storage bin was also constructed next to the compost bin,

where gardeners can keep their tools and supplies. Additionally, the previously existing compost bin, which had been damaged by weather and pests, was repaired and updated.

Juzer Shipchandler designed and built a portable podium for the Monument Crisis Center in Contra Costa County. Shipchandler's project was designed to allow the crisis center to have the option of moving the podium to wherever needed, and to have enough space to hold handouts, check-in stations, a computer, and much more.

Dylan Potter chose to give back to Acalanes High School by refinishing the shot put ring, building a movable bench, and fixing the seat on an additional bench. The project took

several months to complete as a result of the required research, approvals, and necessary adjustments to scope and process.

Braedon Christie's project encompassed the installation of 21 Creek Signs near walking paths in Lafayette for the Lafayette Creeks Committee. His project included working with the Lafayette Creeks Committee liaison to determine the exact locations for installation by surveying and marking each site, obtaining all necessary signs, posts, and backings along with related supplies, and then installing each of the signs in a manner where they could not be removed and were firmly in place.

The Eagle project for Nicolas Dietsch benefited the JF Kapnek Trust to provide educational supplies for preschool children in Zimbabwe. Nick led the effort to collect new and lightly used preschool toys and supplies from neighborhoods in the community, aggregating and sorting the donations, and then organizing and labeling the boxes for transport to Zimbabwe. The goal was to collect twenty boxes of materials to be sent overseas and the troop ultimately collected forty-one boxes.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary presents award to local students

Submitted by Bob Marino



Photo Provided

Pictured are 2024 Good Character Award winners, Sadie Ginestro, Heidi Vanhouten, and Elliot Wong (Joaquin Moraga Intermediate) Nyla Brustrein, Tyson Flournoy, and Bre Redding (Orinda Intermediate) and Ary Deepak, Tyson Flournoy, and Bre Redding (Stanley Middle School) Also pictured: Mr. Scott Parsons, President, Lamorinda Sunrise and Bob Marino, Youth Services Director

The Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary recently recognized a group of young people for their exceptionally good character traits. The Good Character Awards, now in their second year, were presented to nine students from Stanley Middle School, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, and Orinda Intermediate School.

Awardees included Sadie Ginestro, Heidi Vanhouten, and Elliot Wong from JM; Nyla Brustrein, Tyson Flournoy, and Bre Redding from OIS; and Ary Deepak, Bobby Ruhl, and Quinn Sousa from Stanley.

Nominees were selected by teachers and administrators for their sustained acts of kindness, truthfulness, fairness, and

service to others. The awards were presented by Mr. Scott Parsons, president of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, after a brief description of Rotary by Dr. Jamie Textor and the inspirational keynote address by Mr. Tren Kauser, long-time Campolindo science department member and current woodshop instructor.

The ceremony was held at the Campolindo High School library and attended by faculty and administrators from all three schools, district superintendents, and civic leaders. The school library was packed with proud parents and families. Claudia Windfuhr, a teacher at Stanley for 33 years, commented after

the event, "It is my pleasure to work with these students everyday. I know they will make a difference and will surely make the world a better place."

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary has several programs that focus on supporting projects that promote the wellness and mental health of young people in the Lamorinda area and beyond. Rotary members hope that the Good Character Awards will continue to inspire and encourage young people in the community.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Robert Marino summarized the importance of the event honoring those with good character with a quote from coach John Wooden: "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

Commenting on the awards presentation, Mr. Scott Parsons, President of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, noted, "This is a great event which honors and promotes the outstanding young people in our community who give us hope for the future."

For more information on Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary and its programs, please visit their website at www.lamorindasunrise.org.

Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League honors class of 2024

Submitted by Linda Youn



Photo Provided

On March 3, the Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League honored its 21 graduating seniors for their six years of service and leadership at a beautiful event held at the Contra Costa Country Club in Pleasant Hill.

Collectively, the girls have volunteered over 5,700 hours to the community, supporting organizations that provide services to those in need.

Class of 2024, front row from left: Maddie O'Balle, Gracie Carberry, Avery Appleton, Jessica Youn, Janie Hollerbach, Callie Barber, Margaret Palmer, Abigail Palmer, Leyna Machtmes; back row from left: Olivia Roesch, Hanna Bjornson, Vivienne McCarthy, Gia Stassi, Mia Iams, Kate Bertenthal, Mina Lim, Katherine Leamy, Clara Grenning, Sarah Shepherd, Anna MacLeod, Kate Conner

In February, the class partnered with Grateful Gatherings for their senior project, in which they collected large-scale donations and completely refurbished the Oakland home of a former foster care youth, her mother, and five children. Lamorinda NCL supports numerous local philanthropies including Food Bank of Contra Costa County, Monument Crisis

Center, Lamorinda Village, White Pony Express, and New Day For Children.

NCL is a mother-daughter philanthropic organization dedicated to community service, leadership and cultural enrichment. For more information, please visit National Charity League, Inc.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

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Early success and potential shown by Lamorinda baseball teams

By Jon Kingdon

Acalanes
After finishing last season ranked 241st in the state, head coach Connor Hornsby has led Acalanes to a major turnaround this season, starting the year with nine straight wins, a ranking of 14th in the state and third by the Bay Area News group.

"We've had a number of come-from-behind wins and there is no give-in with our team," Hornsby said. "All of our guys understand their roles and we really focus on the little things that allows us to win. We're a lot more selfless and not focusing too much on some of the individual numbers."

As a team, the Dons are batting .313 led by co-captain Sully Bailey (.393), Keegan Goddard (.310), Isaac Copen (.333), Benji O'Rourke (.433), and James Stadt (.385). "Bailey is a big reason for our success," Hornsby said. "Goddard's a top leadoff man, Benji is a first-time catcher [but] has been one of our clutch guys, and Copen is a big body guy with a bright future. We were really young last year, and a number of our starters didn't have huge roles then."

Hornsby, who played for St. Mary's, has taken on the Gaels basketball attitude of gritty not pretty. "We've successfully used the two-strike suicide squeeze and beaten out throws to extend innings with the old school style of grittiness, multiple mentalities with some new age thinking and are our guys are buying into it," Hornsby said.

The pitching staff is led by co-captain Henry Souza and Peter Thorn, along with Branson Smith, Jake Colaco, and Hank Bauer, among others. "Henry has been our number one guy for years," Hornsby said. "He's more of a pitcher than a thrower. Peter is my go-to guy when things get hairy. He can give me five innings or come in and give me two outs. Bauer is a submarine

pitcher that has been very effective in relief."

The infield is solid with co-captain Gavin Bender at third, Stadt at short, and Mason Zirkel at second. "Mason is also a co-captain who understands positioning and is just a vacuum out there," Hornsby said.

The outfield is set with Goddard, Everett Glass, and David Gonzalez. "All of them work hard and nothing gets down out there," Hornsby said. Goddard and Glass are probably the two best outfielders in the area."

Hornsby is also utilizing Paul Kuhner, a sprinter with the track team. "Speed puts pressure on the other team," Hornsby said. "Paul runs like a deer and he's our go to guy when we have some big guys on base that can't run that well." Hornsby accepts the team's high rankings but knows that it comes with a proviso: "With our record, we have a target on our back but we're ready for that. The rankings are nice but I don't want our players to be satisfied with this. I want them to keep putting the pedal to the medal, practicing and playing hard."

Campolindo
Despite losing nine players to graduation, Campolindo, with a roster of three seniors, eleven juniors, and six sophomores, has started this season off well with a 5-2 record.

"We're definitely a brand-new team that is young but is gaining experience," Head Coach Julian Fiammengo said. "A lot of our guys are playing varsity baseball for the first time and I'm proud of how they're competing."

Though it is early in the season, Campolindo has raised their team batting average of .246 last season to .303 led by Cameron Imberg (.450), Jack Luster (.435), William Myers (.412), Andy Moon (.385), and Miles Clayton (.346). "We really don't worry much about batting

averages," Fiammengo said. "We talk about the process and having quality at bats, hitting the ball hard and putting pressure on the defense. If we can continue to do that, the results will take care of themselves."

With a staff of eight to ten pitchers, Fiammengo has a lot of options on who to pitch. The staff is led by senior Joey Cecchin, who came over from the water polo team, William Myers, and Colin Rutzen. There are three left handers on the staff, Dom Caruso, Justin Nagayama, and Alex Rothey, and infielders Moon and Johnny Wang can also be called upon.

"We're still figuring out each pitchers' roles in terms of being a starter, middle reliever, or closer. Joey is very competitive and fits well as a starter or a closer," Fiammengo said, "Myers just needs to get ahead earlier in the count. We're looking at a three-man rotation and we'll use who has the hot hand. Four to six of our pitchers are going to get a lot of innings. We're getting our share of strike outs and that's definitely a good thing."

Replacing Hideki Prather (now at Clemson) at catcher, Imberg has not missed a beat. "Cameron put in a ton of work in the offseason to get better behind the dish and he has been doing a good job for us, receiving the ball really well," Fiammengo said. The defense has been solid, led by shortstop Miles Clayton, second baseman Johnny Wang, and outfielders Blake Robison and Luke McLeod. "Still, we have a lot of work to do," Fiammengo said.

With Moon, Imberg, and Clayton taking on the role of team leaders, sophomores Luke McLeod and Cole Fisher have also been filling that role. "Even though they're sophomores, Luke and Cole have been learning how to lead and that's what I've been preaching to them, that if everybody

becomes a leader, that's when the team can be really good."

Miramonte
After eight years as a varsity assistant coach, Skip Tague was named Miramonte's head coach and, as often happens early in the season, the weather played a big part in the team's preparation for the season.

"At times we did not have a field to practice on, though we did have some good back up plans and it's starting to come together," Tague said. "Our biggest strength is that we have a lot of guys that can play multiple positions. We have fourteen players that can pitch which gives us a lot of versatility on the mound. Our ability to defend and manufacture runs is going to be the key to our success."

Jordan Rodino is the team's most versatile player, being able to play four different positions, and nine players have two positions. "When we practice, we try to get them reps at all those spots because we want to keep that versatility and flexibility and see what's happening in the game," Tague said. "We're relatively inexperienced but the work ethic and maturity level of our players is high. The guys that didn't play much last year are competitors and will get a lot of opportunities this season. They're mature players and I think that they'll excel given the opportunity."

Tague is aggressive in his offensive philosophy. "Our team's strengths are speed and intelligence," Tague said. "We are aggressive on the bases and we're going to try to mix it up a little bit and that's going to be a key to our team's success. We practice that stuff a lot and we'll continue to work on it."

The leading pitchers are J.D. Pearce and Brody Bornstein, though Pearce is injured but should be back soon, with Jordan Rodino and Casey Yung set to fill in. "With a number of games coming



Campolindo pitcher Joey Cecchin Photo Jon Kingdon

up, we'll be going with a three-man rotation, and we have the depth to have a fourth starter, if necessary," Tague said. "With so many available pitchers, I'm a little more cautious with innings and pitch counts, particularly early in the season. I'd rather take them out a little too soon and a little too late."

Joe Shallot and Kobe Wong have been leading the offense and should be helped when Pearce returns as a three or four hitter. "As a team, we're a little behind, but we're getting better each game" Tague said. "Joe was [a] great hitter last year and we expect all good things from him this year. Wong has a lot of pop and a great swing. We're not even close to our offensive potential."

Luke Holden is set as the team's third baseman

and there are seven players that can play up the middle. Tague is particularly taken with the one sophomore on the team, Ian Hughes: "Ian's defense is outstanding and he's a real gamer in all aspects. His baseball IQ is very high, and he plays more like a veteran."

There is also a lot of depth in the outfield with Finn McManus in right, Kobe Wong in left, and Gavin Kelleher in center. "We have good speed at all three outfield positions and that's a big asset for us," Tague said.

As the team is coming together, Tague sees strength in the leadership on the team: "We've got great returning senior leaders. I'm also very impressed with the leadership and maturity shown by the underclassmen and they're all good team guys."

St. Mary's comes up short in NCAA opener vs. Grand Canyon

By Jon Kingdon



Aidan Mahaney (20) and Mitchell Saxen Photo Tod Fierner

With a below average shooting night (39%) and an out of characteristic number of turnovers (13), fifth seeded St. Mary's lost 75-66 to the twelfth seeded Grand Canyon University.

Though obviously disappointed with the loss, at the post-game press conference, St. Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett still spoke proudly about the team. "I don't think we played very well tonight, but it doesn't diminish what we did for the overall year. Our guys did a phenomenal job to do what they did to turn it around after starting 3-5

and then winning 23 of our next 25 games. I'm very proud of this team and our kids hanging together and accomplishing what they did."

With a record of 26-8, having won the regular season conference title and the Conference Title championship, this year's team has had a plethora of awards and recognition come their way and elevated this team to one of the top teams in Coach Bennett's 23 seasons at St. Mary's.

There were four players chosen to the all-West Coast Conference teams –

junior Augustas Marculionis – first team and the WCC Player of the Year, Most Outstanding Player in the WCC tournament and second team all-district by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC), sophomore Aidan Mahaney – first team, second team all-district by the NABC and a finalist for the Lou Henson National Player of the Year Award, presented to the top player in mid-major college basketball, Mitchell Saxen – first team and WCC Defensive Player of the Year, Alex Ducas – second team for the second consecutive year, and sophomore Josh Jefferson – honorable mention.

With his 16th consecutive 20-win season (besides the COVID shortened 2020-21 season), Head Coach Randy Bennett has been named the WCC Coach of the Year for the third consecutive year and sixth time overall. Bennett was also named the District Nine Coach of the Year by the NBC, is one of the 20 finalists for the 2024 Hugh Durham National Coach of the Year Award, and one of the 20 finalists for the 2024 Jim

Phelan National Coach of the Year Award.

Junior Luke Barrett and sophomore Chris Howell were both named to the WCC All-Academic Team, the first time both have been recognized with this award and the third consecutive year that St. Mary's had had multiple student-athletics so named.

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Moraga residence on Electrified Home Tour

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“For 15 years, the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour focused on encouraging people to include native plants in their gardens. But five years ago—because of the climate crisis—we added electrification to the tour’s mission,” Kramer said. “Now, we’re helping people learn how they can power their homes from clean electricity instead of burned gas, saving both money and the planet.”

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., visitors filed into the Chambers/McAlpine residence. Next to a vibrant garden of edibles and native plants, the compressors for the heat pump water heater and HVAC system whirred quietly along the wall. Inside, visitors inspected the kitchen’s induction stove and heat pump dryer in the laundry room.

In the backyard, QuitCarbon and Four Dimensions Landscape—companies that assisted Chambers and McAlpine with electrification and landscaping efforts—set up tables. QuitCarbon helps

residents transition from gas to electric via a free whole-home evaluation, identifying utility costs and available rebates. “Homes are different and complicated. QuitCarbon helps you understand what appliances use gas in your home and what you’re going to convert,” QuitCarbon’s Adam Klaus said. “For instance, it makes sense to get a new, heat pump water heater if your existing one is 12 years old.”

Chambers’ and McAlpine’s journey to their all-electric home was gradual but infinitely worthwhile. It began during the 2020 pandemic, when they installed a Tesla Solar Roof. This 6.3-kilowatt structure, replacing the existing roof tiles, generates more than enough electricity to power the entire home.

To store the electricity for evening use—or in case of a power outage—Chambers and McAlpine also installed two Tesla Powerwall batteries, located in the garage.

Over two years, Eco Performance Builders in-

stalled a ducted HVAC system that warms and cools the house and a SanCO2 water heater, both of which run on electric-powered heat pumps that receive energy from the home’s solar panels. Separately, the homeowners bought an LG heat pump clothes dryer. The purchase of an electric car completed the ensemble.

The whole transition, Chambers says, was relatively free of difficulty, helped by her experience at a prior online Electrified Home tour, where she learned the practicalities of electric living.

“Our house didn’t have air conditioning—our whole day was arranged around managing the heat. Now that we have the heat pump, it’s a real benefit not to worry about that,” Chambers said. “Going electric has provided so many quality-of-life benefits that were unexpected but entirely welcome.”

Homeowners often debate the cost of electric living. But Chambers argues that electric housing’s long-term benefits outweigh its initial cost.

During fire season, California’s rampant power outages never affect her home. “We don’t notice a thing: while others are turning on their generators just to keep their fridges going, we’re fine because of our battery storage,” Chambers said.

Although not entirely off-the-grid due to rainstorms and a lack of daylight during winter, Chambers says her PG&E bills have been cut to just \$10 a month. Moreover, with a Tesla charger for their electric vehicle, the homeowners save a fortune on gasoline.

Federal support helps residents transition to electric housing. The Inflation Reduction Act provides a 30% tax credit rate for some electrified appliances that are in service by 2033. This cut Chambers’ and McAlpine’s solar roof cost down nearly ten thousand dollars, from \$42,981 to \$34,131. A full list of their electrification costs can be found here: bit.ly/48ZbwCl. Scan the QR code for the full home fact sheet.

The Electrified Home Tour is one aspect of

Bringing Back the Natives’ mission to promote sustainability, with the other being its annual native plant Garden Tour, which encourages homeowners to plant native flora in their gardens to preserve local wildlife.

“Native plants have a special place in the local ecology—for instance, some pollinators only forage or lay their eggs on specific plants,” Four Dimensions landscape designer Chris Garcia said. “Additionally, native plants are adapted to our local climate and don’t need extra water during the summer.”

With the aid of Four Dimensions, Chambers/McAlpine garden is now home to blue-eyed grasses, manzanita, oaks, and other native shrubs, trees, and edible plants.

On May 4 and 5, the free Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour will feature 60 native plant gardens and 30 electrified homes. The Chambers-McAlpine residence will again be part of the tour on Sunday, May 5.

The climate crisis continues unabated—this

February marked the world’s warmest month on record. As Kramer says, each of us can combat its devastating effects by transitioning from gas to electric appliances. A 2022 study found that U.S. homes can reduce their carbon footprint by up to 72% by switching to all-electric heat pumps.

“For the future of our children and grandchildren, we can’t continue burning more gas,” Kramer said. “The sooner people electrify their homes and cars, the better.”

In addition to its Garden Tours on May 4 and 5, Bringing Back the Natives will be hosting a virtual tour on Apr. 6 and 7. Visit bringingbackthenatives.net for more information.



Chambers/McAlpine Home Fact Sheet

Miramonte and Campolindo Open Mic

... continued from Page 11

As the evening drew to a close, Tringe and Wong concluded the mic by announcing contest winners. First place was awarded to Campolindo junior Sahana Sarvabhouman for her poem “My Monster; My Love; My Mother.” Campolindo senior Nina Damiano won second place for her short story “The Hunter.” Miramonte junior Ryan Lee earned third place for his story, “Dove in the Dirt.”

First place received not only a T-shirt and Sharetea drink vouchers but also a free class with the local Intuitive Writing Project, headed by founder Elizabeth Perlman, who also attended the Open Mic. “I was overjoyed to be there to support all these incredible writers,” Perlman said. “It takes so much courage to tell your story—I applaud everyone brave enough to share their writing.”

Creative writing holds

the power to bridge all borders, and at the Open Mic, sparks of connection were forged between young poets and writers. “I loved hearing everyone’s perspectives and thoughts expressed through writing,” Culinco said.

Tringe reflected on the performance as “an awesome way to bookend [her] time as president of the PAC.” While she graduates this year, Tringe hopes for future collaboration as sophomore

Kawamoto takes over the club.

Writing is deeply personal—and although sharing expressive pieces can be nerve-racking for many students, shared vulnerability creates community. “It sounds cliché, but nobody is judging,” Tringe said. “Everyone in a room like the Open Mic understands that we all start somewhere. Often your work is better than you give it credit for!”

“Whether you realize

it or not, you already share your mind with others every day, in each of your classes,” contest judge and Miramonte English teacher Colleen Williams said. “You’ll never regret trying some-

thing new by putting yourself out there.”

A list of all writing contest submissions, along with video recordings of each performance, can be found by scanning the two QR codes below.



Photo Gallery



Writing Contest Submissions

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Lamorinda Weekly Volume 18 Issue 3 Wednesday, March 27, 2024



E-battery fire concerns

... read on Page OH4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Spring into Action

By Cynthia Brian

Photos Cynthia Brian



Blue-eyed star grass is a California native

“All through the long winter, I dream of my garden. On the first warm day of Spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.”—Helen Hayes

The minute the air warmed, I headed to the garden. Spring is finally here and without a doubt, it is my favorite season. This year it is especially meaningful because, this, my first spring article, is the 500th column that I've written for the Lamorinda Weekly. Yes, you read that correctly. Since 2008, although not all of them were about gardening, 500 original articles penned by me have been published in this paper. Thank you all for publishing, reading, and commenting.

People often ask me where I get my ideas for new columns. The simple answer is—in nature. When I am out in the garden I am totally focused on the tasks at hand. I listen to the bird songs, the rustling wind, the mooing cows, the fluttering leaves, and the croaking frogs. No earbuds, music, or podcasts while I'm working because the sound of the outdoors helps me be present to ponder.

Before I go out, I slather on the sunscreen and fill my water canis-



Plant a container with freesia, cyclamen, stonecrop, and a small palm.

ter so that I stay hydrated while weeding, seeding, and feeding. When it is cold, I'll wear long pants and a sweatshirt, but when it gets hot, I prefer a tank top and shorts.

This is what my garden gear consists of:

- * Two pairs of gloves: a pair of surgical gloves underneath my garden gloves
- * An Insect Shield® permethrin-infused kerchief wrapped around my neck to keep the ticks away.
- * A scarf on my head with a ballcap covering it.
- * My garden apron with pockets for my pruning shears, sunglasses, and seeds.
- * Rubber boots with two pairs of socks.

In past years, before I donned the Insect Shield® permethrin-infused kerchief, ticks would attack my neck. Three times ticks had to be surgically removed because they were too close to vital organs. This past week, on day three of the warm weather, I worked in a tank top. Alas, a tick tagged me on the shoulder. I only noticed it after my shower.

... continued on Page OH8

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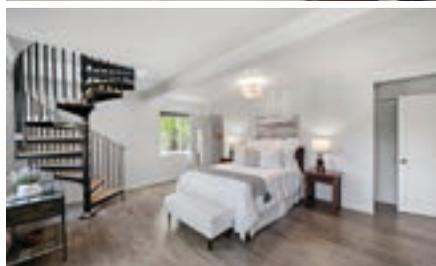


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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	12	\$1,130,000	\$6,500,000
MORAGA	4	\$1,728,000	\$2,300,000
ORINDA	6	\$1,300,000	\$2,305,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

- 15 Billington Court, \$2,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 3243 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 02-12-24
- 386 Castello Road, \$2,480,000, 4 Bdrms, 2128 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 02-12-24, Previous Sale: \$770,000, 04-24-13
- 1000 Dewing Avenue #203, \$1,350,000, 2 Bdrms, 1554 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 02-20-24
- 1089 Glen Road, \$3,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 3408 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 02-14-24, Previous Sale: \$2,495,000, 08-19-15
- 3212 Los Palos Circle, \$3,495,000, 4 Bdrms, 3757 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 02-20-24, Previous Sale: \$2,599,000, 06-12-18
- 3221 Lucas Circle, \$3,201,500, 4 Bdrms, 3117 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 02-23-24, Previous Sale: \$2,300,000, 04-21-20
- 1212 Monticello Road, \$6,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 4785 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 02-14-24, Previous Sale: \$2,325,000, 06-23-07
- 3489 Moraga Boulevard, \$1,685,000, 2 Bdrms, 1384 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 02-12-24
- 3976 South Peardale Drive, \$3,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 2128 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 02-15-24, Previous Sale: \$2,625,000, 01-21-21
- 2548 Pebble Beach Loop, \$1,130,000, 2 Bdrms, 1871 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 02-14-24, Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 05-26-21
- 1516 Pleasant Hill Road, \$2,275,000, 5 Bdrms, 3940 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 02-16-24
- 1115 Silverhill Court, \$1,950,000, 3 Bdrms, 3022 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 02-14-24, Previous Sale: \$900,000, 12-03-14

MORAGA

- 772 Augusta Drive, \$1,765,000, 3 Bdrms, 1908 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 02-23-24, Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 05-19-22
- 1093 Country Club Drive, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2456 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 02-22-24
- 181 Draeger Drive, \$1,736,500, 4 Bdrms, 2675 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 02-23-24
- 414 Fernwood Drive, \$1,728,000, 4 Bdrms, 2217 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 02-21-24

ORINDA

- 71 Barbara Road, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1564 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 02-12-24, Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 11-16-22
- 3 Beaconsfield Court, \$2,140,000, 4 Bdrms, 2100 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 02-15-24, Previous Sale: \$1,225,000, 07-29-15
- 16 Candlestick Road, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 2499 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 02-22-24, Previous Sale: \$300,000, 10-01-86
- 12 Eastwood Drive, \$2,305,000, 3 Bdrms, 2620 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 02-13-24
- 4 Oakview Terrace, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3553 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 02-22-24, Previous Sale: \$2,100,000, 04-18-22
- 340 Tahos Road, \$1,925,000, 3 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 02-15-24, Previous Sale: \$240,000, 02-12-98

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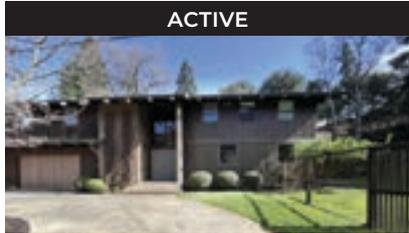


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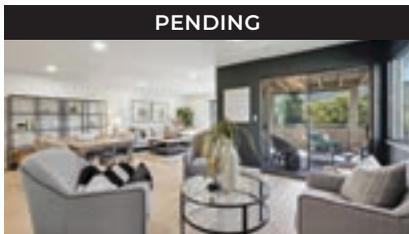
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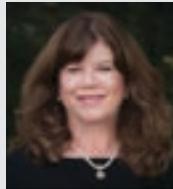
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Care and caution with e-vehicles, batteries offered in CERT talk

By David Scholz

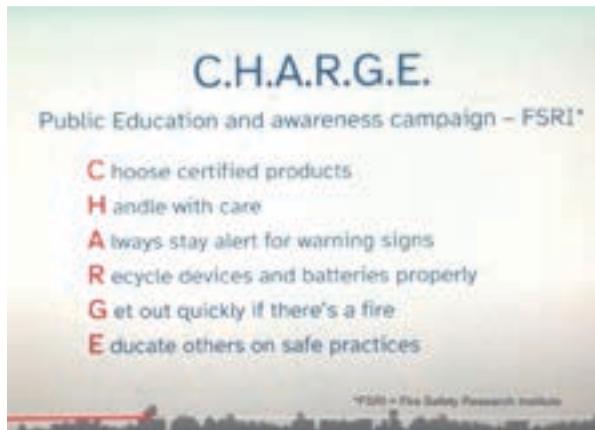


Image provided

Even as e-vehicles (EVs) and other e-mobility devices continue ruling the day for consumers for the convenience they provide, first responders are extolling a cautious position and safety first approach when it's time to park and charge them at the end of the day.

Those insights about EVs, e-bikes, hoverboards, and e-scooters were voiced at the latest gathering of Lamorinda CERT in an online Zoom meeting held on March 11 with guest Capt. Dan Dick, from the Moraga Orinda Fire District, who also is a CERT instructor for utilities, hazard materials, and fire safety module.

"This is (a) \$40-billion-dollar industry that is only growing, and we gotta start understanding how these things can us hurt and how we can protect ourselves," he said.

Dick cited a central question related to e-batteries – how are we going to get that induction motor in the vehicle the power it needs to function?

As part of the presentation, a brief e-battery tutorial was given to explain their chemistry in order to spotlight what is transpiring as batteries are charged and the impact of temperature variants.

"Batteries are like Goldilocks – they don't like too hot or too cold. They like it just right' and when it gets out of those parameters on the hot side that is when bad things can happen," Dick said.

When considering the greater amount of

charge that battery has, "that can create the problem for us as first responders and you as the user of these devices," Dick continued.

Three specific problems areas – mechanical, thermal, and electrical abuse – were noted with the e-batteries.

Mechanical involves physically damaging the unit, such as during a vehicle accident, which in turn interferes with normal operation. Thermal is heat-related, and when heat builds due to the lack of air conditioning or airflow reaching the cells, this can lead to problems like off-gassing. Electrical abuse happens while overcharging, undercharging, or shorts from the inverter. Often, damage can be reversed if caught quickly.

As part of the Zoom presentation, videos were shown to illustrate the potential problems.

In one video, a controlled experiment with an e-scooter showed what can result when electrical abuse occurs with batteries. This film further illustrated the lack of time there is to react and survive in such cases.

A second video shown was an incident from 2018, demonstrating how quickly things happen when off gassing occurs in an uncontrolled environment. An adult went to investigate after a family pet noticed something was amiss; soon after, the camera in the room captured the growing plume of smoke and the fire that ensued, all within 15 seconds.

"That is why I have tried to start educating myself about the dangers of these batteries and mobility devices," said Dick. "When things happen to these batteries, bad things happen."

During the follow up Q&A session with attendees of the presentation, queries were made, including one seeking advice for charging e-vehicles.

"Anything that uses a battery to power the induction motor to make that car go is prone to accidents," said Dick of the universal concerns surrounding e-vehicles, whether they are a Tesla model, Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt, or whatever the car maker.

He noted different car makers are using bigger cells that generate more heat compared to Tesla.

"Different car manufacturers have different ways to deal with potential problems," Dick

continued.

For where one should recharge a vehicle, "I would charge outside," he said.

Regarding the range for keeping the battery charged, it is recommended for every day driving to keep it between 50 to 80% for longer state of charge (SOC), which also means fewer charging cycles are needed. Frequent overcharging heats up the battery. As for running it down, it should not go below 20%, at which point one should start thinking about charging again.

"If you smell something and you are driving and hear some crackling or popping, or see off gassing, don't drive into your garage," said Dick. "Leave (the vehicle) outside. That is (a) sign of imminent problems."

E-battery disposal options

A few local options accept the batteries used for different e-mobility devices, excluding e-batteries for powering electric cars.

REI – Concord, in the Willow Shopping Center, 1975 Diamond Blvd., accepts batteries for e-bikes, as well as those for skateboards, scooters, and hoverboards.

Those merchants accepting only electric batteries used to power bicycles include: two in Walnut Creek, Encina Bicycle Center, 2901 Ygnacio Valley Rd., and Mike's Bikes – Walnut Creek, 1615 North California Blvd.; First Mile Cycle Works, 3566 Mt. Diablo Blvd, in Lafayette.; and at two Alamo locations, The Trek, 80 C Alamo Plaza, and California Bike and Snowboard, 1483 Danville Blvd.

Another option for proper disposal is Hayward-based Clean Earth. It accepts various smaller wattage batteries that power mobility devices for a fee on the second Friday of each month at 30677 Huntwood Ave., off Industrial Parkway. Visit the company's website www.cleaneartinc.com for more details and price information.

Call these specific businesses for more information and to confirm they are currently accepting e-batteries, or contact the manufacturer of the battery for proper disposal options.

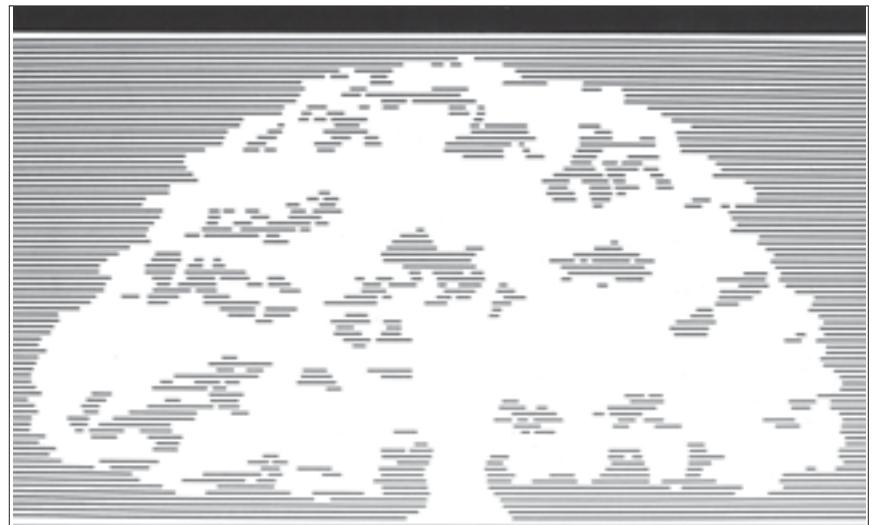
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Spring into Action**

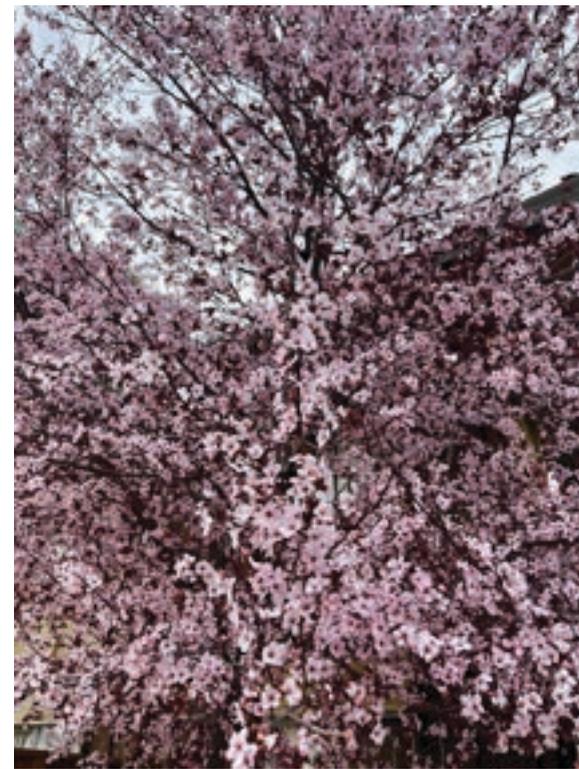
Photos Cynthia Brian



Edible flowers of arugula.



This fluorescent pink azalea blooms in a pot.



The delicate flowers of a flowering plum tree.

... continued from Page OH1

Beware:

A word of caution for the year—ticks are everywhere. They hide in grass, trees, bushes, and weeds. They are bloodsuckers and will attach themselves to you and your pets. They also can migrate from you to someone else or to/from your pet. After being in the garden, make sure to wash your clothes, and your body, and check for ticks. If you find one, do not twist or squeeze. Use a sharp, clean tweezer to lift the tick, and don't touch it with your hands. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water and apply alcohol. Ticks carry bacteria and can cause Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and other diseases. If you can't remove the tick, call your physician as soon as possible. Contact your doctor if you experience an allergic reaction. The longer the tick is in your body, the higher your

chances of an infection. If possible, snap a photo of the tick and put it in a jar or Ziplock bag to show the health care professional. According to the California Department of Public Health, "An infected western black-legged tick must be attached to a person and feed for at least 24 hours before it can transmit the bacteria that cause Lyme disease." Find more information at cdph.ca.gov.

The tick I pulled from my shoulder was small and I couldn't save it or photograph it. Yet, my shoulder is still swollen and sore from the toxins. I will now follow recommendations to apply 20% DEET before going into the fields. I will also wear Insect Shield® permethrin-infused long sleeves, despite the heat.

Spring Action:

We have much work to do now that spring has sprung. It is time to get our hands in the dirt. In one week, we experienced torrential

rain, followed by hurricane-force winds, and then the sweet sunshine of perfect days. The wild weather reminded me of a quote from Mark Twain: "In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."

Weeds sprouted like beanstalks while flowers, shrubs, and trees burst from bud to bloom. It's going to be a long and arduous task for me to weed my hillside as the flowers and weeds are intermingled, which means that each weed must be plucked by the root by hand. No weed whackers allowed else all the flowers and perennials would be destroyed. What's on your to-do list?

Check irrigation systems and test sprinklers. If you have a lawn, the sprinkler heads may be buried underneath a mat of new grass.

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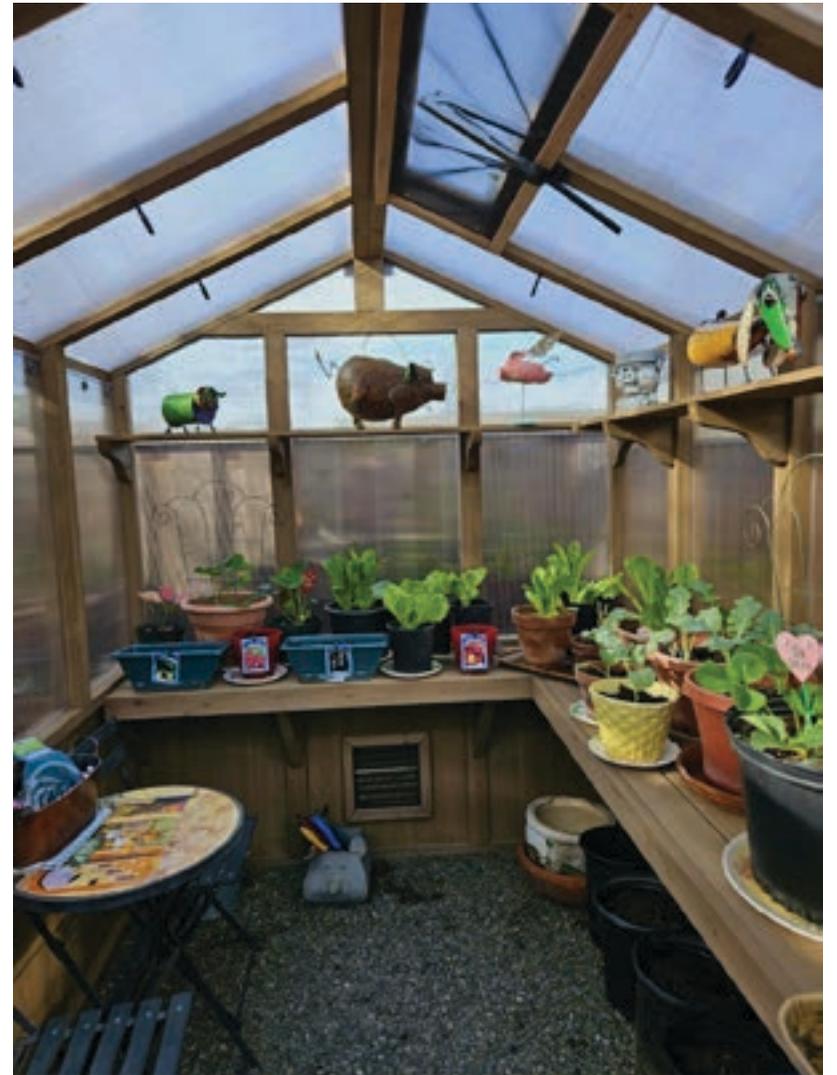
Blue Dutch iris.

... continued from Page OH8

Re-seed lawns to fill in gaps or to make them lusher. Fertilize with an organic spring formula to feed the soil. I always check the weather so that I go out in the rain to accomplish these tasks. By re-seeding and feeding while it is raining, the seeds and nutrients will penetrate.

Weed carefully and steadily. The days are longer, so it is easier to get a few chores done after work. It's important to remove weeds before they go to seed and spread. Each day I make sure to fill at least a five-gallon bucket. For weeds that have roots that will multiply and spread when even a tiny piece is left in the soil, I mix a gallon of 30% vinegar with a cup of table salt, and 1/2 a cup of dawn detergent and spray it where needed. Be cautious as this mixture will kill anything it touches. It is especially effective for poison oak and bindweed. Weeds may go in the compost pile if they are not poisonous or have seed-heads. Euphorbia, oleander, hemlock, poison oak, ivy, bindweed, bull thistle, and any other noxious or toxic plants are best bagged and disposed of in the trash. According to the Weed Science Society of America, a "noxious" weed is "any plant designated by federal, state, or local government officials as injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property."

Bait for snails and slugs. These pests target sprouts and new



Get a head start with seedlings in a greenhouse.

growth. When you see a mucus track or holes in your cabbage leaves, you have an infestation. There are many methods to eradicate them. Spread Sluggo which is considered safe around children, pets, and edible plants because its main ingredient is iron phosphate. You can go out at night with a flashlight and pick them up one by one. Copper barriers also deflect the activities of these gastropods. Sprinkle diatomaceous earth around your garden as these mollusks prefer not to crawl through it. Cheap beer in cups is a remedy I've used repeatedly. They aren't getting drunk, they are attracted to the yeast, and they drown. Raccoons, opossums, mice, and birds feast on these grimy slimy pests. Since slugs and snails multiply rapidly, control the infestation.

Amend your soil with compost and mulch as a solid foundation before you plant.

Add new gravel to garden paths and reinforce wood, brick, or stone edging.

Enjoy the exploding colors as spring unfurls.

There are many more actions to be taken in our spring gardens. In my 501st article, I'll continue with recommendations. In the meantime, dig your fingers into the dirt and let your spirits soar!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing! Happy Spring!

Designing Closet Systems: What You Need to Know

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO(r)



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Installing a closet system can revolutionize your storage space, bringing order and efficiency to your home. Beyond just tidying up clutter, a well-designed closet system maximizes every inch of available space, making it easier to find what you need and streamlining your daily routine.

If you are considering installing or upgrading a closet system, here are some thoughts to consider. I have been designing closet systems as part of my work as a professional organizer for close to 10 years and I've learned a few things!

Before I tell you about the different closet systems, I want to share a couple of insider tips. There are 2 very important spaces that I recommend for everyone's closet and I rarely see them (because...who knew!). The first one is a small designated space for the "clirty" clothes (clean + dirty - the clothes you can wear again before washing). I usually find this category piled up on a chair in the bedroom or heaped in the closet. A more efficient approach is to create a small hanging or stacking space in your closet to neatly keep these items together.

The second space is a place for donations - a small box or bag. Trust me, there are always clothes, shoes, purses, scarves, etc. that we no longer wear but for some reason, they stay in the closet. Having a donation bin in the closet makes it effortless to get rid of these items.

Here are the 3 different closet systems I like to use when creating custom designs:

Custom designed - built and installed by contractors

Custom designed - installed by closet companies

Custom designed - using Elfa closet systems and installed by the Container Store

Custom Designed - Built and Installed by Contractor

These closets are the most customizable as the contractor typically has the skills and experience to construct a high-quality space that is functional and beautiful. They can use every inch of the space,

even if the walls are slanted.

You are able to choose the type of material, color of material, and all the hardware. You can add lighting, soffits, and lockable drawers. Of course, this is often the most expensive option, but it is the most customizable.

Custom Designed - Installed by Closet Companies

When I am designing these closets, my clients are able to choose a wide variety of materials, colors, and hardware. The difference is that you are limited to the materials that the closet company offers (in some cases you can pick out your own pulls and knobs). They are customizable to a point. Often, the company has various widths, lengths, and depths to choose from which is great if your closet fits the exact size. These closets are built-in and can offer many terrific add-ons such as lighting, valet rods, belt racks, jewelry drawer inserts, soffits, lockable drawers, and even an island of drawers in the middle. These closets are expensive but are beautiful, functional, and add value to your home if you were to sell it someday.

Elfa Closet Systems - The Container Store

These Elfa systems are the most ingenious, customizable and budget friendly products that I have worked with. I have designed thousands of spaces using the Elfa system including pantries, laundry rooms, offices, playrooms, mud rooms, garages, walk-in, and reach-in closets. They have 3 different types of systems, all of which can be installed with ease. They are so simple to install, some of my clients have done it themselves (with the help of a video). All of the Elfa types have many components to mix and match including mesh drawers, valet rods, belt and tie racks, gliding pant shelves, and gliding shoe shelves (flat and heel shoes). These systems are really amazing for young kids as the hanging bars, shelves, and drawers can be easily moved higher as your child grows.

Elfa Classic - This system is the lowest in cost and can be cut to fit your exact space. They come in 3 colors (white, platinum, and graphite) and the material is a steel wire which provides strength and durability. They are coated with a protective finish to enhance resistance to rust and corrosion and provide a clean and attractive appearance. I have used this system in all areas of a home, warehouse, and office. I love the versatility of moving the shelves to fit the exact product. The garage components even have a utility board to organize tools and hardware, and now Elfa has a dedicated garage system with closed doors.

Elfa Decor Fascia or Decor - This system has all of the same versatile components and is offered in several colors: white, birch, walnut, or gray. The Fascia version is a piece of trim that goes in front of the ventilated shelf and the Decor is a solid shelf. The price point is higher on the Decor and Fascia and cannot be cut to fit. This is a great solution for a fraction of the cost of built-in closets and will add value to your home.

When designing your new closet, be sure to understand your unique needs such as accommodating the amount of clothing, shoes, and accessories you have as well as how many feet you need for short and long hanging space (yes, measure everything).
Happy Spring!



A yellow and blue odyssey of boxwood, oxalis, and periwinkle.

Photo Cynthia Brian



Cynthia Brian of StarStyle® Empowerment.

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3 which was just honored as the 2024 Nonprofit of the Year by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>

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